



## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Report title: Climate Emergency Action Plan Update**

**Date:** 13 March 2024

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Head of Climate Resilience

### **Outline and recommendations**

#### **1. Outline**

1.1. This report provides an update on the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

1.2. The report covers:

- A summary of discussion at the January 2024 scrutiny review by Sustainable Development Select Committee;
- Updates on actions in the 2020 action plan;
- Proposals for an updated set of actions.

#### **2. Recommendations**

2.1. Mayor and Cabinet is invited to note the update provided on the original 2020 Action Plan and is recommended to agree:

- The proposed set of refreshed actions for 2024;
- The use of the proposed Climate KPIs alongside future reporting on the actions;
- That from 2025 onwards updates to Mayor and Cabinet on the action plan are moved from March to June each year to allow the information to capture a full financial year of delivery.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan was approved by Mayor and Cabinet on 11 March 2020

<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s72555/Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Progress against the Action Plan has been reviewed on an annual basis:

- **10 March 2021** M&C Climate Emergency Action Plan update  
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s78637/Lewishams%20Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan.pdf>
- **9 March 2022** M&C Climate Emergency Action Plan update  
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s96746/Climate%20Emergency%20Update.pdf>
- **8 March 2023** M&C Climate Emergency Action Plan update  
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s108302/230308%20MandC%20CEAP%20FINAL.pdf>

The Executive Management Team discussed the approach set out in this report at its meeting on 29 November 2023.

Sustainable Development Select Committee reviewed the proposed approach to updating the Climate Emergency Action Plan at its meeting on 09 January 2024

<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s112891/06%20Annex%20A%202020%20Action%20Plan%20update.pdf>

## 1. Summary

1.1. This report provides Mayor and Cabinet with an update on the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan. The update includes:

- A summary of discussion at the January 2024 scrutiny review by Sustainable Development Select Committee;
- Updates against actions from the 2020 action plan;
- Proposals to refresh the current set of actions for 2024.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1. Mayor and Cabinet is invited to note the update provided on the original 2020 Action Plan and is recommended to agree:

- The proposed set of refreshed actions for 2024;
- The use of the proposed Climate KPIs alongside future reporting on the actions;
- That from 2025 onwards the annual update to Mayor and Cabinet on the action plan is moved from March to June each year to allow the information to capture a full financial year of delivery.

## 3. Policy Context

3.1. In 2016, the UK Government ratified the Paris Agreement, part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which commits countries to taking action to prevent the global average temperature increasing 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

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In 2019 the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019<sup>1</sup> committed the UK to a legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050. In 2021 the Government published its Net Zero Strategy setting out proposals to deliver the UK's commitment under the Paris Agreement.

- 3.2. Lewisham Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26 identifies the climate emergency as one of four local challenges, and states that:
- We continue to strive towards being a net zero borough by 2030, and will continue to lobby the government and work with our partners to achieve this.
  - We will lead by example, by using 100% renewable energy, retrofitting public buildings where possible to make them more energy efficient, and supporting residents to make their homes warmer and more efficient.
  - Our parks and green spaces are a lifeline to the health and wellbeing of our residents, and provide important resilience against the climate emergency. We will continue to invest in them, and continue to plant more trees – adding to the 25,000 we've planted since 2018.
  - The progress of our Climate Emergency Action Plan will be reviewed annually by our Executive Management Team and through our scrutiny committee process, including reporting annually to the Mayor and Cabinet. We will publish a public update once a year setting out what has been done in that year and updating our set of actions going forward.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan was originally developed in 2019 through a cross-Council working group and informed by a study on the pathways to achieving net zero carbon by 2030.
- 4.2. The Action Plan set out 143 actions across 5 themes. Progress against the action plan has been positive since 2020, particularly in relation to integrating this agenda across the Council, our work in partnership with others and engagement activity. The ambition for the borough to be net zero carbon by 2030 remains hugely stretching and the window for achieving it is closing rapidly.

## 5. Sustainable Development Select Committee

- 5.1. Sustainable Development Select Committee reviewed an update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan at its meeting on the 9 January 2024. The minutes from the meeting record the following comments from the Committee:
- a) SMART targets should be encouraged where this is possible;
  - b) the matrix for prioritisation should balance cost, the likely carbon reduction impact and equalities (in order to support the most vulnerable and to emphasise the importance of social justice);
  - c) an easier read version of the plan would be welcome (as would updates to the information on the Council's website incorporating the actions that individuals could take to reduce their household impact);
  - d) there should be greater integration of the annexes to better demonstrate how they relate to one another (to include clarity about what is and what is not within the Council's control).
- 5.2. Mayor and Cabinet may wish to reflect on the following points in considering these

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111187654>

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comments from the Committee:

- a) SMART targets are shown against relevant Climate KPIs where they exist and will also feature within the set of relevant wider corporate strategies and action plans (see paragraph 7.6 for a list of these). The challenge in relation to setting a comprehensive set of SMART targets is that delivery of the vast majority of actions requires additional funding and capacity over a number of years but most of the resources available are annual or once-off. A requirement to only include actions where a commitment can be made to a SMART target would lead to a significantly limited set of actions. The proposed refreshed 2024 actions remain ambitious and proactive and, combined with the Climate KPIs, will provide a clear basis for understanding the scale of commitment and progress across future years.
- b) Equalities considerations are at the heart of the Council's approach to the climate emergency and from the outset the principle that action on climate change is action for social justice has underpinned Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan. Cost and impact are also fundamental factors influencing the prioritisation of actions within the Action Plan. The prioritisation of actions also reflects a range of other complex factors including whether the Council has direct ownership of emissions, synergy between climate-related objectives and those of service teams across the Council, as well as opportunities to access funding or influence action by third parties. The Council's Net Zero Board provides the lead at officer level in the Council for taking a strategic corporate approach to prioritising the Council's work on the climate emergency and net zero. Annex B which sets out the proposed set of refreshed actions for 2024 provides low/medium/high estimates of cost and impact for actions where practicable as well as identifying those actions relating to emission sources owned and controlled by the Council and those actions specifically expected to address inequalities and support low income and vulnerable residents.
- c) The importance of clear and positive communications on the climate emergency is reflected in the Action Plan. Further details of plans to communicate progress on the Council's work in this area is set out in section 10 below.
- d) Since the review by the Committee further work has been done to integrate estimates of costs and impacts into Annex B which sets out the proposed 2024 Actions.

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## 6. Update on the actions in the 2020 action plan

- 6.1. Annex A includes an update against the 143 actions in the 2020 action plan.
- 6.2. The table at Annex A includes the original wording of the action and reference number, the team it was assigned to in the 2022/23 update and the original indication of timing. The update includes a narrative description and an assessment of progress using the following terms adopted by the UK Climate Change Committee's in their analysis of progress by Government departments on climate change:

- Action Achieved
- Partly Achieved
- Underway
- Not Achieved

- 6.3. The table below shows the distribution of these assessments of progress across the action plan's five themes:

Theme	Achieved	Partly Achieved	Underway	Not Achieved	Total
Leading By Example	26	6	7	6	45
Sustainable Housing	22	16	4	1	43
Decarbonised Transport	5	3	14	0	22
Greener Adaptive Lewisham	7	5	1	1	14
Inspiring Learning & Lobbying	17	0	2	0	19
TOTAL	77	30	28	8	143

- 6.4. Achievements since the 2020 Action Plan was published include
- Delivery of over £3m works to decarbonise Council buildings and schools with funding from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund delivering a combined saving of over 300 tonnes of carbon a year. The works include removal of gas boilers, installing heat pumps and solar panels as well as improved insulation and lighting.
  - Approval by the Pension Investment Committee of the Lewisham Pension Fund Climate Transition and Net Zero policy and reduction in the carbon intensity of Fund by 86%.
  - An ongoing commitment to support renewable obligation backed electricity supply for the Council's corporate electricity contracts.
  - Development and roll out of bespoke 'Climate Literacy' training to Lewisham Council staff and members.
  - Development of a £9m 2 year retrofit programme for the Council's housing stock which includes funding from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme.

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- 2,624 Lewisham households supported through Lewisham’s practical advice service since 2020, helping low income and vulnerable households cut the cost of keeping warm.
- Government approval of Lewisham Council's selective licensing scheme in the borough covering an additional 20,000 properties with the aim of raising standards across the private rental sector.
- Delivery of 48 school streets covering 39 schools, improving safety and air quality around schools at drop off and pick up times through road closures and wider improvements to encourage walking and cycling.
- Increased electric vehicle charging infrastructure with 250 electric vehicle charging points across the borough.
- Year-on-year increases on the numbers of cycle hangers installed.
- Significant rise in street tree planting combined with best-in-class survival rates for trees through a community-based approach to caring for trees.
- The Council's sustainable drainage in schools project won the Trees for Nature and Climate Award at the London Tree and Woodland Awards 2023.
- The launch of Lewisham’s Climate Action Investment enabling residents to invest money at a return of 4.3% a year for 5 years. The fund raised £659,957 from 612 investors and will support projects from the Council's Active Travel Fund.
- Growth of Lewisham’s Schools Climate Network with staff and pupils from local primary and secondary schools. In January 2024 the Council, in partnership with the Horniman Museum ran a Big Schools Climate Conference with workshops, creative events and discussion.

## 7. 2024 refresh of actions

- 7.1. Lewisham’s Climate Emergency Action Plan has had positive external recognition and the Council has consistently been assessed in the top 20 local authorities nationally under the Climate Emergency UK scorecard assessments. It is however clear that since the Action Plan was published there has been significant change across the policy and funding landscape service teams are operating in.
- 7.2. Annex B sets out a proposed refreshed action plan with 60 actions.
- 7.3. Annex C set out a set of 35 Climate KPIs.
- 7.4. The proposed refresh has been based on the following principles:
  - Create a clearer focus on priorities
  - Integrate relevant Council strategic documents
  - Ensure a clear evidence base for action, in particular costs for decarbonising sources of carbon owned by the council
  - Ensure a clear focus on social justice
  - Quantify the scale of challenge and delivery

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7.5. The table below compares the proposed 2024 actions with the 2020 set:

Theme	2020	2024	Updated	Unchanged	New	Closed
Leading By Example	45	17	15	1	1	26
Sustainable Housing	43	15	10	4	1	29
Decarbonised Transport	22	6	4	1	1	17
Greener Adaptive Lewisham	14	12	10	0	2	5
Inspiring Learning & Lobbying	19	10	7	2	1	12
TOTAL	143	60	46	8	6	89

7.6. As identified above, one of the principles of the refresh was to align the action plan with strategic documents that have been produced since the Climate Emergency Action Plan was published in March 2020. These strategies, which are referenced within individual actions in Annex B, include:

- Lewisham Council Corporate Strategy 2022-26;
- Catford Town Centre Framework;
- Flood Risk Management Strategy 2022-27;
- Air Quality Action Plan 2022-27;
- Waste Management Strategy 2021-31;
- Reduction and Recycling Plan 2023-25;
- Electric Vehicle Implementation Strategy 2023-2026;
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2020-25;
- Lewisham Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026;
- Pension Fund Climate Transition & Net Zero Policy;
- Lewisham Local Plan 2020-40;

7.7. In addition, there are a number of key strategic documents that are currently in development including:

- Asset Management Strategy;
- Active Travel Plan;
- Housing Retrofit Strategy;
- Digital Strategy;
- Local Economic Development Strategy;
- Staff Travel Plan;
- Local Area Energy Plan;
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Public Realm Design Guide;
- Lewisham 2030 Community Action Plan.

7.8. These strategies contain a wealth of relevant information. It is proposed that the current set of actions are streamlined to reflect this and to minimise duplicative demands on service teams and present a clearer focus on what the Climate Emergency Action Plan priorities are. This refresh of the Action Plan is intended to be part of an ongoing approach to adapting the actions as the funding and policy

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landscape evolves nationally, regionally and locally.

- 7.9. Alongside the 60 actions set out in Annex B it is proposed that the annual update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan is supplemented by a set of Climate KPIs, arranged against the five themes. This responds to the feedback asking for more quantified information on progress and the degree of challenge involved. This set of 35 Climate KPIs is set out in Annex C.
- 7.10. Providing full cost information in relation to each action is extremely difficult. Many of the main sources of local emissions from housing and transport are not the direct responsibility of the Council and the mechanisms for achieving net zero for the UK do not align with the 2030 Climate Emergency date. Instead of providing broad cost estimates on all actions it is proposed instead to focus detailed cost information specifically in relation to those sources of emissions that the Council has greatest control over. The revised plan includes actions to cost delivery in these areas and work has already progressed on this. This work includes:
- A costed plan for retrofitting the corporate estate
  - A costed plan for retrofitting the local authority maintained schools' estate
  - A costed plan for electrifying the Council's fleet
  - A costed plan for retrofitting the Council's housing stock.

## 8. Future reporting

- 8.1. The set of actions for 2024 are intended to reflect the latest position in terms of Council workstreams as well as national policy and programmes. These will inevitably continue to change over time but refreshing the action plan makes it easier to accommodate new or amended actions in future years. The UK Climate Change Committee terminology used to assess progress (identified above in paragraph 5.2) also includes a fifth category "New" which can be used for the next round of reporting on the Action Plan to identify new actions.
- 8.2. Further actions relating to the decarbonisation of the Council's housing stock will need to be based on a robust assessment of the overall condition of stock and reflect the evidence established through the new stock condition survey.
- 8.3. It is proposed that from 2025 onwards updates to Mayor and Cabinet on the action plan are moved to June each year rather than March to allow the information to capture a full financial year of delivery.

## 9. Cost and impact estimates

- 9.1. Estimates of costs and impact in relation to carbon savings have been included in Annex B as a way of illustrating the challenge and potential of actions in the 2024 Action Plan. This information is intended to illustrate context and scale but would require significant additional work for use in more detailed policy and programme design.
- 9.2. It is important to reiterate that developing costed plans and identifying estimates of expenditure does not represent a commitment by the Council to achieve net zero carbon at any cost. Establishing robust financial information underlines the scale of work needed and will enable Lewisham to move quickly as new funding opportunities emerge.

## 10. Communicating progress on the Action Plan

- 10.1. The ambition for the borough to be net zero by 2030 cannot be delivered by the Council working alone and clear and effective communications and engagement are an essential part of building the proactive consensus and partnerships to deliver the

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transition to net zero.

- 10.2. Alongside the update to Mayor and Cabinet officers have developed a public-facing version of the Action Plan with the aim of making our work in this area more accessible and meaningful to a wider set of stakeholders. The intention is that this document will be published shortly after Mayor and Cabinet subject to the committee's response to the recommendations in this report.

## **11. Financial implications**

- 11.1. Achieving the ambition for Lewisham to be net zero carbon has significant cost implications. Work undertaken to support the development of Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan estimated a minimum cost of £1.6bn over 10 years.
- 11.2. Lewisham Council's funding from government has been hugely reduced since 2013/14, while at the same time, the Council has faced increased costs through population growth, changes to government policy, the COVID19 pandemic and costs associated with inflation and rising energy bills. Considering the minimum cost required to achieve the action plan, there is a need to find creative ways to find the resources needed to support this work.
- 11.3. Responding to the Climate Emergency is about making better use of resources and creating an alternative to a high-carbon consumer economy. In this context there are potential connections between delivering on a low carbon agenda and the Council's need to cut expenditure and secure greater financial stability.

## **12. Legal implications**

- 12.1. The report refers to the Climate Change Act 2008 and regulations under that Act. The Act establishes a legal framework that underpins the UK's commitment to tackling climate change, including reducing CO2 emissions and addressing climate risks. The provisions of the Act apply at central government level.
- 12.2. Local authorities can use their own powers to take actions. The relevant powers are likely to include the wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which allows local authorities to do anything that individuals generally may do. The existence of the general power is not limited by the existence of any other power of the Council which (to any extent) overlaps the general power.
- 12.3. The matters considered in this report are not key decisions. The implementation of various matters referred to in this report may be key decisions and if so will be addressed through the appropriate mechanisms when those decisions arise.

## **13. Equalities implications**

- 13.1. The Council must have due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. This requires all public bodies, including local authorities, to have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 13.2. The Council's Single Equality Framework 2020-2024 provides an overarching framework and focus for the Council's work on equalities and helps ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

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- 13.3. The risks and impacts of a changing climate will not fall equally, and without action the consequences will exacerbate poverty and health inequalities globally and locally. The principle that action on climate change is action for social justice has underpinned Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan from the start, and provides the primary justification for taking an ambitious and proactive approach to climate action despite the significant financial pressures involved and the absence of a statutory role for local authorities.
- 13.4. It is also important to recognise that the fundamental nature of changes needed to deliver the transition to net zero creates risks that the actions taken to limit carbon emissions could disadvantage low income and vulnerable individuals and communities. The Council's Equalities Analysis Assessment process has been built into the development of the new Housing Retrofit Strategy to ensure that the recommendations for decarbonising the borough's homes address inequalities and are based on a broad understanding of the potential benefits and risks of different pathways to net zero.

## **14. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 14.1. The environmental implications of the climate crisis are identified in the Action Plan. Since Lewisham's 2020 Action Plan was published good progress has been made to embed action on the climate within the Council's strategies and operational functions, and to bring together the Council's work across wider environmental activity particularly in relation to the Council's Waste Strategy, the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, the Air Quality Management Plan, the draft Local Plan, the Flood Risk Management Strategy and the current Sustainable Streets programme.

## **15. Crime and disorder implications**

- 15.1. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **16. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 16.1. Delivery of Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan supports a range of health and wellbeing benefits to residents, including actions to improve air quality, increased participation in active travel as well as support for low income and vulnerable households to cut the cost of staying warm in winter.

## **17. Background papers**

- 17.1. Report to Sustainable Development Select Committee 09 January 2024  
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s112891/06%20Annex%20A%202020%20Action%20Plan%20update.pdf>
- 17.2. Original 2020 Climate Emergency Action Plan approved by Mayor and Cabinet on 11 March 2020  
<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s72555/Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

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## 19. Glossary

Term	Definition
Carbon / Carbon dioxide	Carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) is a naturally occurring gas fixed by photosynthesis into organic matter and is a by-product of fossil fuel combustion, land use changes and other industrial processes. CO <sub>2</sub> is the principal greenhouse gas (see below) associated with human activity and climate change (see below) and the reference against which other greenhouse gases are measured. Unless otherwise indicated the terms 'carbon' or 'carbon dioxide' are used in this report to refer to a combined measure of greenhouse gases (CO <sub>2</sub> e or CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent), of which carbon dioxide is the most common.
Carbon Neutral	The term "carbon neutral" is used in this report in line with the original declaration of a Climate Emergency in Lewisham. Carbon neutrality balances greenhouse gas emissions with carbon removals. As defined by the Committee on Climate Change, a net-zero or carbon neutral target requires "deep reductions in emissions, with any remaining sources offset by removals of CO <sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere". In the context of Lewisham's target this means additional carbon removal and storage activity at the borough level or 'carbon offsets' funding an equivalent removal outside the borough.
Carbon Offsetting	Carbon offsetting enables individuals and organisations to compensate for any emissions they cannot avoid by paying for a carbon credit, typically a payment for an equivalent amount of emissions to be reduced or removed elsewhere. These emissions savings are generated through the implementation of a variety of projects such as planting trees and installing solar panels. Offsetting should be seen as an option of last resort and there is no commitment by Lewisham Council to fund carbon offsets to meet the aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2030.
Climate	Climate is usually defined as the average weather, or more rigorously, as a statistical description in terms of the mean and variability of relevant quantities over a period of time ranging from months to thousands or millions of years. The relevant quantities are most often surface variables such as temperature, precipitation, and wind.
Climate Change	Climate change, as used by the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change, refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.
Fuel Poverty	The Government's definition of fuel poverty for England and Wales states that a household is said to be in fuel poverty if: they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level), and, were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line. There is a direct link between living in cold and damp conditions and poor health outcomes.
Greenhouse Gases	Greenhouse gases are those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere which absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of thermal infrared radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, by the atmosphere itself, and by clouds. This raises global temperatures with a consequential impact on climate. Water vapour (H <sub>2</sub> O), carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ), nitrous oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O), methane (CH <sub>4</sub> ), and ozone (O <sub>3</sub> ) are the primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere.
Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions	Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions are a method of defining, measuring and reporting carbon emissions on an organisational or an area basis. Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling. Scope 3 includes all other indirect emissions including in particular the supply chain.

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