

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 16 JULY 2020

**Report title: Tackling Climate Change in Light of Covid-19**

**Wards:** All

**Portfolio:** Deputy Leader of the Council (Sustainable Transport, Environment & Clean Air):  
Councillor Claire Holland

**Report Authorised by:** Sara Waller and Eleanor Purser, Co-Strategic Directors for Sustainable Growth and Opportunity

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### Report summary

This report outlines progress over the last 12 months in developing the council's climate change response, including an update on the citizen's assembly on climate change. Covid-19 has had a significant temporary impact on climate change globally, with reduced economic activity leading to reduced carbon emissions. This report updates the Committee on the impacts of Covid-19 on the council's climate change programme, and our consideration of climate change in our approach to economic recovery.

### Finance summary

As the report is for information there are no direct costs arising from the recommendations of this report and the cost of preparing this report has been met from existing revenue budgets.

### Recommendations

1. To note the update provided in this report.

## 1. CONTEXT

- 1.1 In January 2019 Lambeth Council declared a climate emergency. Drawing on the evidence of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) the council agreed that urgent action needed to be taken to avoid the catastrophic effects of rising global temperatures. Throughout the world, municipal government has been recognised as playing a critical role in responding to climate change; bringing together businesses, public sector organisation and communities to develop policy and plans that reduce carbon emissions while taking account of other local needs.
- 1.2 This need to carefully consider the local context and ensure a wide range of people have a voice in the development of our climate action plan, is particularly important in Lambeth. The last few months have shown us that shocks, such as those posed by Covid-19, and those which we may expect to arise from increasing global temperatures, do not impact communities equally.<sup>1</sup> They both exacerbate existing inequalities and have the potential to create new inequalities.
- 1.3 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on carbon emissions across the world. Governments have taken action to control the spread of the virus by imposing 'lock-downs', severely curtailing economic activity, which has in turn reduced carbon emissions. The economic impacts have been severe, and governments are now turning their attention to recovery. Many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), business groups and civil society groups are now calling for governments to prioritise investment in those measures that will support a green recovery; enabling a transition to a lower carbon economy.
- 1.4 The pandemic has exposed residents to different ways of working, travelling and shopping; it has demonstrated the importance of social networks in making communities resilient and providing protection to those who become vulnerable; and it has reaffirmed the importance of our green spaces. Some of the changes in behaviour we have seen during the pandemic have environmental benefits, and if they can be maintained, will be an important part of embedding a green recovery in Lambeth.

## 2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

### Update on work programme since July 2019

#### *The carbon baselines*

- 2.1 In July 2019 the council published its corporate carbon reduction plan, which set out the actions the council would take to ensure its operations were carbon neutral by 2030. The plan identified the main areas where action would need to be taken, but also set out further work that would be needed to ensure a robust and transparent approach to carbon reduction. This included the development of a baseline of carbon emissions, for both the council's operations and the wider borough.
- 2.2 The council has measured and reported on carbon emissions for 8 years, using an approach determined by central government, called the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC). This reporting requirement ended last year, giving local government the opportunity to develop a new, more thorough, approach. As well as working on a baseline for Lambeth, officers have been working with their counterparts across London through London Councils, and with the LGA, to agree an approach across the sector, allowing councils to compare data.
- 2.3 Over the last year the council has been working on two baselines: one for carbon emissions associated with the council's operations; and one for the borough as a whole. The purpose of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Beyond data: Understanding the Impacts of Covid-19 on BAME Groups*, Public Health England, 2020

baselines is to enable the council, residents and businesses to understand the sources of carbon emissions in order to take action to reduce them, as well as to track progress towards carbon neutrality. For the council's operations, the baseline has been used to develop a roadmap to meet the 2030 carbon neutrality goal.

- 2.4 Establishing the council's carbon baseline has been a huge manual data exercise. For 10 months officers from the sustainability team have been working with services right across the council to collect data, verify it, and undertake analysis to calculate emissions. In some areas, such as waste, officers have had to put in place new methodologies for calculating emissions.
  - 2.1.1 The council's baseline includes emissions generated from the council's activities and estate, including: energy use from our buildings (corporate, housing (communal areas), schools (LBL), libraries, parks buildings); transport (council owned or leased fleet), water treatment. Emissions arising from staff travel to and from work and waste are measured and included in separate reports, but not included within the baseline. This is because we do not as yet have a robust enough method for collecting scope 3 emissions, and therefore the data would skew the baseline.
  - 2.1.2 To create the corporate baseline, data was taken from Lambeth Procurement Team showing gas, electricity and water use for all council buildings and fuel data showing use of our fleet. Carbon emissions were calculated with this data using a formula provided by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The corporate baseline was created by officers in the council's sustainability team and then peer reviewed by environmental consultancy, AECOM. The corporate baseline has used data from 2018/19, the most recent year for which we have a full dataset.
  - 2.1.3 To create the boroughwide baseline, we used data provided by BEIS. Central government provides high level data on the sources of emissions within a local area. Any detail below this level is likely to rely on partners, businesses or residents voluntarily providing their own carbon emissions assessment. This baseline was also peer reviewed by AECOM.
  - 2.1.4 Producing our first carbon baseline has been a huge piece of work. It is an absolutely vital piece of work too, as it gives us a real insight into where we need to take action and we can begin to map out a path to carbon neutrality by 2030 and monitor our progress along the way. As with any manual data gathering exercise, it has revealed areas where we do not currently have data, or where the data is of poor quality. Officers will need to continue to work over the coming years to address these gaps to improve our understanding of the council's emissions. The results of this work may affect the baseline position.
  - 2.1.5 The baselines, including the key findings, are set out in Appendix A.

#### *Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan*

- 2.3.1 The first iteration of our Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan, published in July 2019, set out 18 actions the council would take to reduce carbon emissions. These included measures to improve energy efficiency across the council's buildings and homes, agreeing standards for new homes built by Homes for Lambeth, reductions in the use of fossil fuel vehicles, changes to the council's approach to procurement and decision-making, and measures to encourage sustainable travel and reduce the carbon footprint of staff.
- 2.3.2 The plan will be reviewed each year to monitor progress against the actions, and to add additional actions where necessary to reach our 2030 carbon neutrality target. Whilst calculating the council's emissions baseline was a vital and very resource intensive piece of work over the

past year, the council has already made progress on reducing emissions. Some of the actions already taken include:

- Retrofit completed on two schools
- Homes for Lambeth business plan agreed and published incorporating sustainability strategy
- All Lambeth buildings have been switched to a renewable electricity supplier
- Procurement policy changed for new suppliers to ensure they share our commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030
- 24 fossil fuel vehicles replaced by electric vehicles
- 130% increase in pool bike usage by staff for work journeys
- Staff incentive scheme for sustainable behaviour introduced
- Replacement of lighting on highways with LED lights complete

2.5 Work has begun on the longer-term actions, including the analysis of our commercial property portfolio to identify options for reduced carbon emissions, the development of a more extensive retrofit programme for schools and other public buildings, and work to incorporate consideration of carbon emissions and environmental benefits into our decision-making. As agreed in the Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan, a full report on progress over the last year will be brought to Cabinet in September.

2.6 Although the corporate carbon reduction plan provides a clear focus for the action the council will take to reach the 2030 target, for our climate change response to be successful it must be embedded right across the organisation; in our strategies, policies and services. This goes beyond carbon reduction, to include work to protect biodiversity and build resilience. Some of the actions taken in the last year include:

- Adopted a new transport strategy in November 2019 with the objective of decarbonising transport in Lambeth. Implementation over the last year has included building protected cycling infrastructure, putting in place school streets and installing bike hangars. By the end of 2020 we will have also installed 180 electric vehicle charging points.
- Adopted a new waste strategy to address emissions arising from waste
- Adopted a single use plastics policy to eliminate the single use plastic purchased by the council, and to work with community groups addressing single use plastics in their neighbourhoods.
- Adopted an integrated pest management policy to help protect biodiversity
- Divested another £200m of Lambeth's pension fund from fossil fuel investments

2.7 The council's action to reduce carbon emissions is important, both in its own right, and to provide leadership to others in the borough and the local government sector. But it is equally important to build partnerships and work with others to support their climate action, and to see how by working together we may have a greater impact. This has been an important part of the council's climate change work over the last 12 months, and in building those partnerships and relationships, we believe that we will be better placed to influence policy on climate and develop more impactful climate action in our borough. Some of the work in this area over the last 12 months includes:

- Working with our local strategic partners through Lambeth 1<sup>st</sup> to share and align our climate goals and action
- Working through the London Councils' TEC/LEDNET committee to agree a London-wide climate change programme, with Lambeth officers nominated to work on key workstreams
- Working with London Councils and the LGA to develop sector-wide approaches to measuring carbon emissions.
- Working with Lambeth's BIDs to support business-led action on climate change and sustainability, including trials of low-carbon delivery vehicles in Brixton and West Norwood, coffee cup recycling in Brixton, and local energy trading in the Southbank area.

### *Lambeth's citizens' assembly on climate change*

- 2.8 The council agreed to facilitate a citizens' assembly on climate change. Genuine action to tackle the climate emergency is only possible if everyone within the borough has a stake and plays their part. This is an important part of the council's wider communication and engagement programme on climate change, which aims to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and build consensus around the action we will need to take locally to reduce climate risks and improve our resilience. Citizens' assemblies are recognised as a valuable tool in engaging a wide range of people in the policy making process, and have proved particularly useful in enabling local areas to develop the climate action plans in a way that takes account of the trade-offs associated with reducing carbon emissions.
- 2.9 Over the last year a number of citizens' assemblies on climate change have taken place in the UK, at both the local and national level. In preparing for our assembly, we have benefited from the experience of these early assemblies, and have spoken to those involved in Camden, Oxford and Brent's assemblies, and reviewed published materials from others. This has helped us to refine our approach to recruitment, engagement prior to the assembly, governance and the assembly sessions themselves.
- 2.10 Although deliberative engagement is not new in the UK, citizens' assemblies are less familiar. There is rapidly growing body of knowledge, and an emerging set of best practice guidance, which has been used to inform the approach Lambeth has taken.
- 2.11 In February 2020 the council appointed Traverse (formerly OPM) to assist the council in designing the assembly, recruiting the assembly members, and facilitating the assembly sessions. A steering group was appointed, to be chaired by the Leader of the Council, and an expert advisory group. The assembly sessions were due to take place in May and June. In March public health measures were introduced to control the spread of Covid-19. This included new rules on physical distancing that prohibited meeting in groups, as required for a citizens' assembly. Therefore, the decision was taken to delay the assembly until such time as it was safe to do so.
- 2.12 However, there is still an urgent need to act on climate change, and after engaging with stakeholders it was clear that there was an appetite for engagement to continue, so as not to delay our collective work in this area. Therefore, in July we will launch an online engagement programme. The website and accompanying engagement activities will help develop the evidence base on the causes and impacts of climate change, and also possible solutions, which will feed into our assembly when it takes place. We also hope that this will give greater visibility to the work of different groups and organisations in tackling climate change.
- 2.13 The council's recent experience of online engagement and decision-making has shown that it has the potential to widen participation. However, as with any form of engagement, there will also be those who are less likely or unable to participate, and we will need to take action to address this. This is particularly important in this programme if we are to meet our objectives around ensuring that those who are likely to be most impacted by climate change have a voice and can shape our response.

### *The council's climate change programme and team*

- 2.14 Climate change will have a profound impact on Lambeth and its residents, and the council. In order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 the council will have to re-think how it provides services, runs its operations and develops policy. The council has therefore established the climate change programme as one of council's 13 strategic transformation programmes, with progress reported to

Management Board every six weeks, and a programme board chaired by a Strategic Director in place with representation from across the council to guide and support the work.

- 2.15 The council's budget for 2020/21 allocated £250,000 of development funding for the council's climate change programme. This funding has primarily been used to recruit two new staff to the climate change team. A number of structural changes have also been made to bring together staff with skills and expertise around climate change, air quality and sustainability. This has created a team of 9 staff working on climate change and sustainability, and a further 9 staff on transport strategy and implementation.
- 2.16 These staff will have an important role in bringing greater capacity, expertise and coordination to the council and borough's climate change response. However, climate change is a complex systems problem, and reducing carbon emissions and building greater resilience will need almost every part of the council to play a part, along with our businesses, communities, partners, regional and central government. The role of the team, therefore, is also to facilitate and enable greater leadership and action right across our organisation.
- 2.17 To support this, the council is also reviewing current and developing strategies to ensure that climate change is adequately reflected, for example, in our asset management strategy, inclusive growth strategy and housing strategy. Recent work on impact assessment and decision-making also offers opportunities to embed climate change considerations.

### **The impact of Covid-19 on Lambeth's climate change action**

- 2.18 The impacts of Covid-19 on climate change have been widely discussed in recent months, and parallels drawn between the effects of Covid-19 on our economy and society, and those which we might expect as global temperatures increase.<sup>2</sup> In the short-term, the shutdown of industry and workplaces, the restrictions on travel, and disruption of consumption patterns are estimated to have reduced global carbon emissions for this year somewhere between 4 and 10%. Climate groups and others are calling for countries to use this as an opportunity to reset; to make changes that mean we do not return to such unsustainable ways of living.
- 2.19 In Lambeth the pandemic has had a profound effect on our communities and economy, the full extent of which is probably not yet fully understood. It has also changed the way the council operates: moving almost all staff to remote working; rapidly building new services; and cementing partnerships and relationships as we have worked together to support our residents. There have also been measurable positive impacts on the local environment. As the number of vehicles on Lambeth's roads reduced, air quality has improved, and as with the global picture on carbon emissions, it is likely we have seen falls in emissions locally.
- 2.20 As we emerge from the first phase of the crisis, there are two overarching objectives for the council: to protect the health and wellbeing of our population; and to support our economic recovery. Our climate change response is a critical part of both. This section of the report provides updates on two aspects of our emergency response to the pandemic, which demonstrate the impacts of Covid-19 on the climate change work, and the opportunities it has presented.

### *Emergency Transport Programme*

- 2.21 It was apparent in late March that although lock-down measures were in place, people would still need to travel around the borough and to do so in a way that allowed them to maintain physical distance from others. This would be even more of an issue when lock-down was eased and people began to travel for work, for shopping, or to access essential services. With the reduction in available

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *The Economist*, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.

public transport there was also the risk of a rapid rise in private vehicle use, which would in turn would have a disastrous impact on air quality and road safety.

- 2.22 The Transport Strategy Implementation Plan had been approved in 2019, with detailed plans for how the borough would decarbonise transport, improve air quality and improve road safety over the coming years. The measures set out in the strategy would also be effective in enabling more walking and cycling and reducing road danger, which was critical for safe travel during the pandemic. The need to implement urgent works to respond to maintain public safety during the pandemic meant that there would be significant secondary benefits for climate change and air quality. The pace of implementation potentially means that we will be able to realise these benefits much quicker than in normal times.
- 2.23 After urgent work to widen footways at key pinch points were complete, the council agreed to repurpose £1.8m of the Highways Improvement Programme budget so that a number of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and Healthy Routes could be implemented, targeting those areas at greatest risk should private vehicle use increase, and key connectivity routes between our town centres. A bid was simultaneously submitted to TfL to fund these works as part of their emergency transport fund.
- 2.24 Over the last month two Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) have been implemented, and work has begun on two Healthy Routes. We expect to implement at least 5 more LTNs over the next four months, and a total of 6 healthy routes. The pace and scale of this programme is unprecedented, but the council is clear that the risks of no change are significant and a 'do nothing' approach could be catastrophic for public health and wellbeing. We expect benefits in terms of improved air quality, decarbonisation of transport, improved road safety, potential for increased activity on our high streets and higher levels of active travel, and will monitor for these throughout the programme.

#### *Economic recovery*

- 2.25 The UK economy is predicted to shrink by 14% this year according to the Bank of England. This rapid fall in economic activity is likely to result in higher levels of unemployment than we have seen for many years, and higher rates of business failure as enterprises struggle to return to profitability after the lockdown. There is a widespread consensus that government at all levels will need to act to support economic recovery and avoid the scarring effects of recession.
- 2.26 The choices government makes in how it supports the economy to recover matters. In order to meet the binding targets of net zero carbon emissions for the UK by 2050, there will have to be significant decarbonisation of the economy. As the government looks to stimulate the economy, there are opportunities to invest in this transition, and in the process deliver benefits such as job creation, new skills, and improved health and wellbeing. Initiatives such as retrofitting homes to improve energy efficiency, renewable energy and storage, electric vehicle manufacturing, and reforestation are all being put forward by central, regional and local government as viable ways to invest in green growth.
- 2.27 In Lambeth, the council has worked quickly to support businesses through the first phase of the pandemic, and to put in place support for residents who may become unemployed. It is now turning its attention to the economic recovery and transition, which will be set out in the Economic Recovery Strategy. Across the wider economic recovery strategy, there is a focus on supporting Lambeth's green goods and services sector, which our own analysis shows has the potential to grow and create more jobs and investment in the coming years. Over the next 12 months, the council will launch a co-investment fund to incubate businesses in high growth sectors, including low carbon start-ups; look to build a stronger cluster of low carbon business in Lambeth – the first in London; establish a series of work academies to strengthen sector based skills, including green skills; and invest in digital infrastructure across the borough.

2.28 There are opportunities to support the economy in Lambeth through the climate change programme and so the council is working quickly to bring forward those schemes within the climate change programme that can also support economic recovery. This will be reflected in the forthcoming capital investment programme. The investment we need to make to improve energy efficiency in our homes will also help stimulate the retrofit sector leading to investment in skills and job creation. As we move away from gas to heat our homes, we will need to increase the amount of renewable energy generated locally and nationally. Lambeth already has a number of innovative schemes on its schools, council buildings and council homes that show the potential of solar, but there is an opportunity to increase this in the coming years. Although much of our effort will rightly be focused on reducing carbon to reduce the risk of climate change, we will also need to improve our resilience to climate change. Our cities will need to become better at coping with rising temperatures and increased flood risk, and we will need to mitigate the impact of poor air quality. This could mean increasing and improving green infrastructure, again with benefits for local skills and employment. We have already shown how this can work on our emergency transport programme; using green infrastructure businesses to help delivery the schemes.

2.29 For an effective economic recovery all levels of government will need to work together. Lambeth is therefore working closely with other London boroughs, the GLA and central government. There is a strong alignment between Lambeth's focus on a green recovery and the rest of London, with opportunities to collaborate on this agenda, and also lobby for investment in this area from central government.

### **3. FINANCE**

3.1 The cost of compiling this report and the studies related to it have been contained within existing budgets which include the additional £250,000 funding allocated as part of the 2020-21 budget process.

3.2 Some of the measures detailed dealing with the impact of COVID-19 have been funded by repurposing existing capital budgets or allocating additional funding for business support activity. These actions have been the subject of separate decision reports.

3.3 As the Council's longer term plans evolve it is likely that further capital funding may be required to implement projects such as retro-fitting buildings and these funds will need to be identified as part of the capital budget-setting process, although it will be important to secure grant funding to support the Council's ambitions in this area.

### **4. LEGAL AND DEMOCRACY**

4.1 There are no legal comments on this report. Specific legal advice will be provided as required.

4.2 There are no further comments from Democratic Services.

### **5. CONSULTATION AND CO-PRODUCTION**

5.1 The report describes the ways in which the council will work with others to develop its climate change plans and projects. This work has already begun over the last year and will increase as the programme develops and as the climate change team is established and we increase the amount of



resource we have to dedicate to this work. Examples of some of the engagement activities completed, or planned to take place in 19/20 include:

- Council Take Over Challenge – Lambeth Schools climate change workshop
- Lambeth First partnership board climate change session
- Lambeth First conference – climate change workshops
- Lambeth staff conference – climate change mini-assembly
- Net Zero Heroes – staff climate action and awareness programme
- Citizen’s Assembly on climate change
- Lambeth Climate Action - online engagement programme
- Youth Council’s visioning project
- Lambeth’s young peoples imagined future cities project – KCL/Lambeth
- Unlock summer youth programme – climate skills for Lambeth’s young people

## **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 The risks associated with the council’s climate action programme are captured within the corporate risk register, and the programme reporting.

## **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.2 As the report above indicates, we believe that climate change will have a number of equalities impacts. This assumption is drawn from global research, which has looked at the impacts of climate change to date and has often found that it is those with fewest resources that have been most exposed to impacts such as rising temperature, flood, drought and poor air quality.

7.3 The climate change programme is building our local evidence base on the equalities impacts of climate change. We will shortly publish our Annual Public Health Report, which focuses on climate change and its impacts on Lambeth’s communities and their health and wellbeing. Our 2020 residents survey is also a useful source of data. Our citizen’s assembly and pre-engagement will also be an opportunity to build our understanding of the way in which climate change, and the policy we put in place to mitigate it, might impact Lambeth’s communities.

7.4 Given the importance of engagement in building our equalities evidence base, we are conducting a longer than usual engagement programme ahead of our assembly to allow multiple voices to be heard. We will complement online engagement with facilitated conversations and outreach to different groups and networks, monitoring participation to ensure it is broadly representative of our borough, and taking action where necessary to address gaps.

7.5 We anticipate drawing together this evidence into an Equalities Impact Assessment that will accompany the borough-wide action plan.

## **8. COMMUNITY SAFETY**

8.1 None

## **9. ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Environmental**

9.1 This is considered in the body of the report.

### **Staffing and accommodation**

9.2 None

## Procurement

9.3 None.

## Health

9.4 There are likely to impacts on the health of Lambeth's population arising from the climate change. The Annual Public Health Report will be published shortly, providing analysis of these risks. This will be used to inform the climate change programme and associated plans, which will look to mitigate these impacts.

## 10. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 N/A

<b>AUDIT TRAIL</b>				
<b>Consultation</b>				
<b>Name/Position</b>	<b>Lambeth directorate / department or partner</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Comments in paragraph:</b>
Councillor Claire Holland	Deputy Leader, Sustainable Transport, Environment and Clean Air	29.06.20	29.06.20	Throughout
Sara Waller & Eleanor Purser, Co- Strategic Directors	Sustainable Growth and Opportunity	29.06.20	29.06.20	
Matthew Gaynor, AD Finance (Capital and Major Projects)	Finance & Investment	06.07.20	06.07.20	3
Andrew Pavlou, Legal Services	Legal & Governance	06.07.20	06.07.20	
Gary O'Key, Senior Democratic Services Officer	Legal & Governance	29.06.20	29.06.20	Throughout
Rob Bristow, Director	Planning, Transport and Sustainability	29.06.20	29.06.20	

<b>REPORT HISTORY</b>	
<b>Original discussion with Cabinet Member</b>	01.06.20
<b>Report deadline</b>	06.07.20
<b>Date final report sent</b>	06.07.20
<b>Part II Exempt from Disclosure/confidential accompanying report?</b>	No
<b>Key decision report</b>	No
<b>Date first appeared on forward plan</b>	N/A
<b>Key decision reasons</b>	Not applicable
<b>Background information</b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A – Lambeth's carbon emissions baselines

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