

London Councils' Executive

Climate Change Policy

Item no: 4

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Summary: This report alerts the Executive to discussions at the Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) concerning action on climate change. These discussions have sought to address the growing desire of Member authorities to increase their activity individually and collectively to address concerns surrounding climate change where a majority of London boroughs have announced climate emergencies.

TEC is developing a programme of proposed work that will support action on climate change and take forward related components of London Councils Pledges to Londoners. TEC is able to fund this work from within its own resources and members of TEC wish to do so. However, climate change related activities are currently outside TEC's authority.

This paper seeks an in-principle decision from the Executive that a report should go to Leaders' Committee in December requesting that this work should be undertaken.

Recommendations: The Executive therefore is asked to:

- Take a view on the proposals for further action on climate change being proposed by the Transport and Environment Committee; offer any further advice and decide whether or not to agree in principle to this work being undertaken;
- Note that a report will be taken to Leaders' Committee on 3 December 2019 for discussion and agreement if the in-principle decision at Executive is one of support for this proposed activity.

Climate Change Policy Context

1. The Climate Change Act (CCA) was enacted by the UK Government in 2008. The CCA committed the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 per cent of 1990 levels by 2050. This has since been changed to 100 per cent in June 2019 by the government, committing itself to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions.
2. The CCA requires the government to set legally binding carbon budgets to act as stepping-stones towards the 2050 target. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK and must be set at least 12 years in advance to allow policymakers, businesses and individuals enough time to prepare. Carbon budgets cover a period of five years and we are currently in the third carbon budget (2018-2022). Once a carbon budget has been set, the CCA places an obligation on the Government to prepare policies to ensure it is met. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
3. Recent international reports on climate change have raised public concern on the issue. The October 2018 International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) special report on 'Global Warming of 1.5 degrees' and the May 2019 UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report on 'Net Zero – the UK's contribution to stopping global warming' have been especially influential. Ipsos MORI reported in August 2019 that 85% of Britons were concerned and 52% very concerned about climate change.
4. The government has recently published its response to the 2019 CCC report, reiterating that its Clean Growth Strategy will form the basis for meeting the next two carbon budgets but concedes that further action will be necessary to meet the challenging targets. The Mayor of London, in his Environment Strategy, has committed to the capital to be a 'zero carbon city by 2050 and many boroughs have declared climate emergencies and are in the process of producing action plans to become carbon neutral or zero carbon¹.
5. The 26th Conference of Parties (COP), an annual UN event, which reviews the national communications and emissions of parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change, is expected to take place in the UK, in Glasgow, in November 2020 (the final announcement will be made at COP25 in Santiago, Chile in December). This follows landmark meetings of the COP including Kyoto 1997 and Paris 2015.

¹ Carbon neutral means that there are likely to still be emissions created which would be offset by other activities, and carbon zero means that there are no emissions created at all.

London Councils Actions

6. Political leaders in individual authorities and many local authority professional groups across London have already taken action. The Chief Executive London Committee (CELC) has set up an Environment sub-group with an initial focus on climate change. The London Directors' Environment Network (LEDNet) has set up a 'climate change cluster', where a group of directors focus on climate change discussions and regularly report back to the whole network for input and review. There is a common desire for improved collaboration on planning and delivering climate action plans.
7. London Councils TEC Executive and full TEC have discussed climate change at its last three meetings. The latest work has proposed a programme of aligned activities developed from wider thinking across London local government.
8. This work will require additional resource, estimated to be a maximum of £289,000 covering a two-year period from February 2020 and this can be funded from uncommitted resources held in a specific reserve within the TEC funding stream. Members of TEC wish to deploy resources to this end. However, climate change related activities are not within the functions delegated to TEC in the TEC Agreement and are therefore currently outside TEC's authority.
9. Leaders' Committee however could agree to undertake the work as outlined in the table below in paragraph 12, with this work being funded by a transfer from TEC specific reserves. Leaders' Committee would need to give approval to accept the transfer of resources from TEC to the Joint Committee for this purpose.
10. The Executive will, therefore, wish to take a view on the proposed work to address climate change; to offer guidance on refining the goals of that work and then to consider the question of the proposed transfer of TEC specific reserves to fund the new activity, in advance of a report being presented for consideration by Leaders' Committee on 3 December 2019.

Proposed Programme of Activities

11. Discussions amongst members of TEC and across officer groups in London local government have arrived at an emerging consensus that the programme should encompass three main strands:

- **Boroughs:** Support boroughs to put in place climate action plans that are effectively structured, resourced, governed and supported (within and outside the council), based on robust evidence and accompanied by ongoing monitoring.
- **Sub-regional and London-wide:** Work with boroughs to identify and deliver shared projects that are needed at a sub-regional or London-wide scale to support our collective climate targets.
- **National action:** Understand the barriers to delivery, and what package of investment, powers and leadership can unlock delivery of climate targets. Work with boroughs, the GLA and national partners to identify and advocate for these.

12. The table below provides an overview of the main areas where London Councils could usefully assist and add value to these goals.

Boroughs	Sub-regional / London-wide	National advocacy
Assist with establishing a robust baseline of emissions across London boroughs – this would require consultancy support but should provide increased value for money and ensure consistency compared to boroughs doing this on their own	Assist with energy efficiency projects and programmes, particularly retrofitting. This will require working with several different stakeholders, including the London Housing directors, GLA and others	Lobby for improved fiscal measures to support retrofitting, the installation of renewable technology and EV infrastructure
Identify, support and share best practice around establishing a climate change action plan. This would include borough officer and member events	Energy generation including renewable projects and heat networks. Again, this will require working with several different stakeholders, including the GLA	Advocate for improved financing and possibly powers for climate change initiatives, e.g. a new 'green deal'
Signpost boroughs effectively to the current guidance documents produced by several organisations. This would entail the analysis of these guidance documents and recommendations on which ones are suitable to a London borough setting.	Sustainable procurement, including energy – working with the London Energy Project and the Mayors green procurement code team to develop guidance that boroughs can adopt to their local circumstances	Lobby for stronger planning policies to support carbon neutral development
Co-ordinate views and activities of the boroughs through assisting the borough officer network	Influencing and engaging with the planning sector, utilising our links with the planning officer society and other networks	Lobby for stronger, national decarbonisation of transport

Boroughs	Sub-regional / London-wide	National advocacy
Discuss and work jointly with other stakeholders as appropriate, such as TfL, GLA, Environment Agency, UK 100 , LWARB, LGA, ADEPT , LCCP , ALEO , LECF and others.	Continue to work on decarbonising travel in London through encouraging walking and cycling and move to electric vehicles for any necessary car journeys	Develop a collective voice with colleagues on climate asks in advance of COP26
Support training for members and officers on 'carbon literacy', either directly or through sign posting appropriate LGA events	Assess the cost vs impact of different actions that boroughs can undertake on their own or collectively, to identify climate actions that can deliver greatest value for money	Identify the collective gap in climate funding and lobby for this
Provide guidance on procurement, energy efficiency projects, divestment, using carbon offset funds and available funding opportunities	Undertake research to support boroughs to understand the views of different groups of Londoners on climate action, what action they would support and why	

Next Steps

- The recommendations of the Executive will inform the LC TEC Executive meeting on 14 November, which will consider a business case for further resources. The intention would then be for the outcomes of both meetings to be reported to Leaders' Committee and TEC in December for final decisions.

Recommendations:

The Executive is asked to:

- Take a view on the proposals for further action on climate change being proposed by the Transport and Environment Committee; offer any further advice and decide whether or not to agree in principle to this work being undertaken;
- Note that a report will be taken to Leaders' Committee on 3 December 2019 for discussion and agreement if the in-principle decision at Executive is one of support for this proposed activity.

Financial implications for London Councils

The Director of Corporate Resources reports that the cost of the draft proposals outlined in this report are estimated to be a maximum of £289,000 over a two-year period and can be funded by a transfer of uncommitted funds from a TEC specific reserve to the Joint Committee, as detailed in paragraphs 8-9 above.

Legal implications for London Councils

As outlined in paragraphs 8 and 9 above, climate change related activities are not within the functions delegated to TEC in the TEC Agreement and are therefore currently outside TEC's authority.

However, the proposed activities are within the functions delegated to Leaders' Committee and these can be funded by a transfer of uncommitted funds from a TEC specific reserve to the Joint Committee.

Equalities implications for London Councils

None arising from this report