

Leaders' Committee

Climate Change Strategy

Item

5

Report by: Kate Hand **Job title:** Head of Climate Change

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Summary: This report provides an update on London Councils' climate advocacy work in the run up to COP26, outlines the refreshed Government climate policy suite and key outcomes of COP, and concludes with considerations for evolving London Councils' Climate Change Programme Strategy.

Recommendations: The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the paper; and
2. Comment on the proposals for the development of London Councils' Climate Change Programme Strategy (paragraphs 19 – 26)

Climate Change Strategy

1. London Councils is delivering an ambitious 2021/22 climate change strategy, approved by London Councils' Executive and Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) in early 2021. An update report on the climate strategy was submitted to Leaders' Committee in March 2021 and Executive in September 2021.
2. This report provides an update on London Councils' climate advocacy work in the run up to and during COP26, outlines the refreshed Government climate policy suite and key outcomes of COP, and concludes with considerations for evolving London Councils' Climate Change Programme Strategy.

London Councils' climate advocacy

3. London Councils' climate advocacy work has been guided by an overall narrative, agreed with the GLA in April (Appendix 1), and a set of four major asks, agreed by TEC in June: recognising the critical role of local government; supporting the UK Cities Climate Investment Commission (CCIC) and supporting green skills; providing long-term financing and regulatory support for domestic retrofitting; and enabling transport infrastructure to support a green recovery.
4. In pursuit of these aims, officers have engaged with Government departments directly and with partners, made the case through successful parliamentary engagement, and hosted or secured speaking slots at influential events that have enabled us to build support for our core messages.
5. We have successfully made the case for the central role of local government in delivering net zero, through engagement with the National Audit Office, the Environmental Audit Select Committee, DLUHC Minister Eddie Hughes MP and Permanent Secretaries across five different government departments, working with partners including the LGA. See also paragraph 13 on the Net Zero Strategy, below.
6. We have worked closely with Core Cities and the Connected Places Catapult to establish the UK CCIC, and through innovative research, widespread stakeholder engagement and

a series of six public events through the year – culminating in an event in the COP26 Blue Zone with Helen Whately MP (Exchequer Secretary) – we have secured significant private and public sector support for our proposals for accelerating private finance into place-based net zero investment.

7. In concert with the Retrofit London programme lead boroughs, Enfield and Waltham Forest, we have published a widely supported Retrofit London Housing Action Plan, profiled the programme with BEIS and DLUHC and secured their membership of the programme Steering Group, and hosted a successful programme launch event, joined by Deputy Mayor Shirley Rodrigues amongst others. We have also engaged with BEIS to address concerns around their Green Homes Grants Local Authority Delivery scheme in particular, and have seen some real improvements in further stages of retrofitting funding.
8. London boroughs have shown their ambitions around active travel during and post pandemic and have delivered schemes in record numbers, albeit the very difficult financial landscape. TEC members and officers have engaged extensively with DfT officials to describe the impact the short-term funding deals have not only on TfL but on boroughs as well and these discussions are ongoing. TfL has supported our ask to government to decouple Healthy Streets funding from the wider negotiations and we continue to press this point. Boroughs have continued to deliver on EV infrastructure and government has made additional funding available through the Spending Review, which is open to London's boroughs.
9. Together with addressing these priority areas, we have supported boroughs to adopt common messages and branding with our [Climate Advocacy Toolkit](#), and developed a public-facing climate communications brand: '#BeTheSolution'. Kingston has led the way with their #BeTheSolution campaign on active travel to encourage more walking and cycling, developed as part of the Low Carbon Transport programme. Together with our polling on Londoners' attitudes to climate change, this work is helping to show that London communities want to see action on climate change, and that boroughs are delivering it.

10. We launched our polling at our very well-attended Borough Climate Conference in October, where we also heard keynote remarks from Mayor Glanville and Deputy Mayor Rodrigues and showcased the work of the seven climate change programmes. A key message of that event is that boroughs want to build on successes to date, with ‘faster and better’ action going forward.¹
11. Finally, we have continued to build our collaboration with the GLA under the Green New Deal mission. Our joint paper to the September London Recovery Board meeting was welcomed, including our proposals to use new green jobs and skills research to identify and focus on key green economy sectors, and to host a Summit on retrofitting in early 2022 to accelerate progress and set out a roadmap to 2030. We will also be strengthening our collaboration around green finance, as a shared priority. This joint partnership was profiled at the London Climate Summit in late October, which set out London’s offer on net zero and acted as a springboard into COP26.²

UK government climate policy suite

12. Since our report to Leaders’ Committee in March, the Government has published its Decarbonising Transport Strategy, Net Zero Strategy, Heat and Buildings Strategy and the Net Zero Review (from Treasury). Together, these articulate the Government’s approach to meeting its 2030 and 2035 carbon emissions reduction targets, building on the Prime Minister’s 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.
13. The Net Zero Strategy in particular clearly recognises the ‘essential’ role of local government in delivering on net zero, the need for clarity around funding streams and greater capacity and takes steps to meet our asks for better coordination and dialogue. London Councils will actively engage with these processes going forward, seeking to develop action-orientated mechanisms to enable local government to deliver. This includes areas where our role is not yet clearly defined, for example around building the local green economy and skills. The direction on key areas such as planning, the role of

¹ [About Climate Change | London Councils](#)

² [The London Climate Summit - YouTube](#)

hydrogen and behaviour change, are yet to be determined. We will continue to embed thinking around our seven climate change programmes, and their ability to act as exemplars for long-term, cross-cutting delivery.

14. The funding picture is less supportive, with limited new funds announced for local government net zero delivery, and less overall funding for areas like retrofitting than had been pledged. However, £300m was put forward to support the delivery of food waste services by local authorities. The Budget and Spending Review had very limited focus on net zero – for London or elsewhere – and did not meet the £30m ask from the UK CCIC, which would enable the partnership to develop a model that can ultimately draw in many times this amount in private sector investment, nor our request for support for the seven climate change programmes.

COP26 outcomes

15. COP26, hosted in Glasgow from 30th October – 13th November, produced a number of important outcomes. Most importantly, it is seen to have kept the Paris Agreement ambition not to exceed 1.5°C alive, although as COP President Alok Sharma admitted, ‘the pulse is weak.’ If countries meet their conditional and unconditional ‘Nationally Determined Contributions’ (to reducing emissions under the Climate Convention) for 2030, projected warming falls to 2.4°C; if longer-term promises are achieved – e.g. the UK’s target of net zero by 2050, projected warming falls to 1.8°C.
16. The formal negotiations managed to conclude the ‘Paris Rulebook’ (which outlines, for example, how countries should account for emissions, the use of carbon markets and rules on transparency) and to adopt the Glasgow Climate Pact. The Pact is a political decision that aims to achieve more ambitious climate action, including urging parties to come back to COP27 with stronger carbon emissions reduction targets, calling on parties to ‘at least double their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation’, and highlighting ‘the urgent need for multilevel and cooperative action’, which includes the role of local government.

London Councils climate programme strategy

17. As outlined above, London Councils has achieved excellent outcomes in its key climate advocacy priorities in 2021; we will need to work to maintain the same momentum post-COP, and to build on these successes to secure delivery of the detailed policy framework and funding that can enable boroughs to deliver on their net zero targets. Our existing priorities will need to evolve to reflect new government policy and opportunities, to reach new audiences and influencers (including parliamentarians) with compelling evidence of the need for change, and to reflect the breadth of our seven climate change programmes, whilst focusing resources to achieve tangible, positive outcomes.
18. In particular, green finance and work through the UK CCIC will continue to be a priority. We will use the momentum generated through COP and stakeholder engagement to accelerate identification of capacity needs within local government and funding to test our 'Net Zero Districts' demonstrators.
19. Strong partnerships have been a feature of our work in 2021, and will continue to be critical to our success, in London and on the national stage. We are already in the process of building some of these, for example with business organisations around commercial retrofit, with Sub-Regional Partnerships on green skills and employment, and with London's higher education institutions on data and practice across our net zero ambitions.
20. Equally, we should continue to make the case to Londoners for climate action, and the role of the boroughs. In 2022, we will develop and expand the reach of #BeTheSolution as a tool for boroughs, and develop narratives that support all Londoners to take action and move along a pathway to a sustainable lifestyle that responds to their needs and situation.
21. We will also seek to reach councillors with a wider suite of portfolios, to support understanding of how climate action plays into areas as diverse as education, public health and innovation.
22. In 2020 – 21, we have supported the lead boroughs to establish the seven climate change programmes, engage across their peers and draw in external partners, and we have established a governance structure that enables us to address cross-cutting issues and

ensure the programmes are more than the sum of their parts. By the end of the year, we expect that six out of the seven programmes will have a complete action plan. The programmes are essential vehicles for our collective delivery, and in 2022 we need to support them to begin delivering action that can further build our collective capacity and effectiveness on net zero. To do this, we will need to support the programmes to address core capacity and funding needs, share learning across all London' boroughs and partners, as well as highlighting the achievements to a wide audience.

23. We will transition the Emissions Accounting Task and Finish Group into a standing Working Group, which will support reporting based on the approach agreed at October TEC, address outstanding areas for which there is no agreed approach, including investments, and provide ongoing peer support between boroughs for this new area of work.

24. Finally, we will support work to ensure that London Councils is 'walking the talk' on climate, including agreeing an overarching climate change ambition for the organisation and support to staff and members to positively contribute to this agenda regardless of their position and circumstances.

Recommendations

25. The Committee is asked to:

- i. Note the paper; and
- ii. Comment on the proposals for the development of London Councils' Climate Change Programme Strategy (paragraphs 19 – 26)

Financial Implications

26. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report

Legal Implications

27. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report

Equalities Implications

28. There are no specific implications for equalities arising from this report

Appendix 1: Climate change narrative

1. We have a shared vision for a more connected city that is greener and lower carbon, more equal, healthy and resilient, and where all London's residents, business and diverse communities can thrive.
2. To deliver this vision, in 2021 we will be:
 - Working with Londoners to put their hopes, concerns and activities at the heart of London's climate action
 - Supporting our burgeoning green economy to help us build back better from Covid-19, creating markets for local businesses, good jobs for Londoners and innovation
 - Making the case that London should be a leading engine for the green recovery that supports and works alongside other cities, regions and international partners, putting a just transition at the centre of how we do this
 - Working in partnership with our diverse communities including young people, our businesses and the government