

This is an open report

Report to: Confident Places Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting(s): Wednesday, 30 November 2022

Subject: Annual Progress Report on the Climate Crisis

Report of: Paul Barton, Director - Environment

Contact Officer: Kerrell Boardman, Climate Change Manager (01942 489290)

Cabinet Portfolio Holder and area: Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Environmental Services, Councillor Paul Prescott

Summary:

The purpose of the report is to provide the second update on action on the climate crisis. The report includes sections on the updates of each climate action theme, as well as an update on Wigan Council emissions for 2021/22 and Wigan Borough emissions for 2020 (this information is provided by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and is backdated every 2 years). The report also includes a look ahead to priority actions on climate for the next 12 months.

Link to Corporate Priorities:

Our People: Together we feel happy, safe, included and look out for each other:

- Best start in life for children and young people
- Happy healthy people
- Communities that care for each other

Our Place: Together we are proud of our towns and look after our environment:

- Vibrant town centres for all
- An environment to be proud of
- Embracing Culture, Sport and Heritage

Our Future: Together we will build a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive:

- Economic growth that benefits everyone
- A well-connected place
- Confidently digital
- A home for all

Wards Affected: All

Recommendation(s):

The Confident Places Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. endorse and comment on the second Annual Progress Report on the Climate Crisis;
2. review and comment on the proposed priority actions on climate for the 2022/23 period; and
3. review and comment on the supporting presentation

Implications:

What are the financial implications?

As the nature of the report is monitoring progress, there are no financial implications to the development of the report itself.

Is budget release necessary (Capital Expenditure Only)?

Capital expenditure is currently utilised for net zero related projects including walking and cycling and decarbonisation.

What are the legal implications?

The Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK government to reducing domestic greenhouse gas emissions by a set date. In June 2019, the Act was updated based on more accurate climate projections, therefore the UK Government increased the UK's legislated target for greenhouse gas emissions reductions from at least 80% to at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline by 2050. In April 2021, it was decided by Government that the UK would enshrine a new target into law; that being to cut national emissions by 78% by 2035. As the national target is legally binding, central government will soon begin to apply pressure to public and private sectors through regulation, legislation and possible carbon taxes to deliver on climate commitments.

With regards to air quality, the European Union Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC has been transposed into English law as the Air Quality Regulations 2010.

What are the staffing implications?

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason). If not required, then a relevance check needs to be completed.

As this report is an Annual Progress update, with no decisions to be taken, an impact assessment is not required.

What are the property implications in terms of reduction, addition or change to the council's asset base or its occupation?

None

What are the Corporate Parenting Implications?

None

Risks:

The changing climate will impact all on Earth, and the extent of this impact locally depends on the action taken now. Climate change disproportionately impacts the most disadvantaged and vulnerable residents and communities; therefore, the Annual Progress Report on the Climate Crisis supports the Council's overall Outline Climate Change Strategy.

As the Council has publicly declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, there is a very high reputational risk to the Council if we fail to act now on climate change. The report mitigates this risk and provides confidence and support to residents and communities that Wigan Council are taking a leadership role on this global threat and reporting on Council and borough wide greenhouse gas emissions.

Sustainability/Environmental implications:

The Annual Progress Report on the Climate Crisis will support the overall monitoring and quantifying of the Council's actions to tackle the climate emergency. This will also support the mitigation and adaptation to climate change, as well as supporting the delivery of a cleaner, greener Wigan Borough.

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

As Wigan Council approved and declared a Climate Emergency motion during the July 2019 Full Council, we are now required to act on this motion to ensure we deliver on our commitment to become a Net Zero Council by 2038 or sooner, bringing the borough along on the journey. As part of this commitment, within our Outline Climate Change Strategy, a requirement was to provide an Annual Progress Report on the Climate Crisis.

There are no alternative options to tackle the climate emergency, we must mitigate emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

There are no background papers for this report.

Directorate Sign-off:	Paul Barton
Date:	11 November 2022

Please list any appendices:

Appendix number or letter	Description
A	Annual Progress Report on the Climate Crisis 2021-22

1. Background

- 1.1. Wigan Council declared a Climate Emergency on 17th July 2019. In response to this declaration, an Outline Climate Change Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in October 2020. The strategy requires an annual progress report to be created every year from 2021 to at least 2038, to ensure progress on climate action is monitored and effectively managed.
- 1.2. This is the 2nd Annual Progress Report on the Climate Crisis and details progress attained on the priority actions through 2020-21, identifies progress across the 6 climate action themes and looks ahead to priority actions for 2022-23.
- 1.3. It should be noted that the Committee has now scrutinised all six climate action plans.

2. Section 1 & 2: Progress on the Climate Crisis

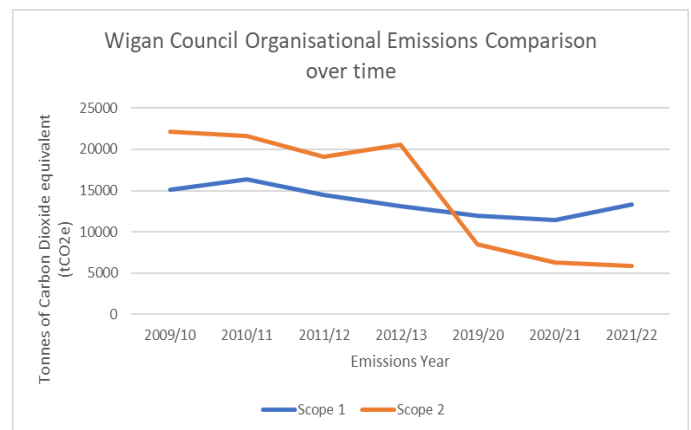
- 2.1. The introductory sections of the report comment on the progress on climate action across Wigan borough after emerging from prioritising the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate action is now becoming embedded into Council operations and strategy and has been built into the newly emerging Litter Strategy, Wigan Local Plan, Asset Management Strategy and the Be Wigan Experience.
- 2.2. Example of progress on priorities set out in the first Annual Progress Report include:
 - Delivery of the first digital Go Green week engagement campaign
 - Creation of a Climate Awareness Training course for all staff and elected members, to be rolled out by the Climate Response Team who have been trained as carbon literacy trainers
 - Development of a sustainable business infrastructure across the borough
 - Collaboration with Wigan & Leigh Youth Cabinet to deliver the first Wigan Youth Climate Summit, a fully youth-led experience for schools and colleges across the borough
 - Launched the first workshop for the Wigan Climate Coalition
- 2.3. Examples of progress on our six climate action themes include:
 - **Our Resilience & Adaptation** – deployment of 50 highway gullies and sensors across the borough to monitor silt build up and therefore flooding. Collaboration with the Environment Agency and United Utilities on high-risk flood hotspots. Deployed critical weather scenario training for key frontline staff.
 - **Our Air Quality & Transport** – created a dedicated Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure working group focussing on the creation of a strategy for the borough and reviewing various infrastructure options. Working to create the Borough's first active neighbourhood in Worsley Mesnes.
 - **Our Natural Environment** – over 70,000 trees have been planted and 17,000 hectares of species-rich grassland created resulting in increased biodiversity, flood prevention, habitat creation and the take up and storage of carbon dioxide.
 - **Our Built Environment** – completed decarbonisation measures worth £5.7m on 5 council owned buildings including Leigh Sports Village, Turnpike and Howe Bridge Leisure Centre. The Wigan Local Area Energy Plan has been created, setting out steps to decarbonise the borough's energy.
 - **Our Sustainability & Consumption** – upgraded 79% of our fleet vehicles to Euro-6 compliant engines. Local Kitchen has begun work on its Carbon

Reduction Plan, aiming to become a carbon neutral caterer. The recycling rate for Wigan borough in 2021/22 was 53%.

- **Our Communities & Wellbeing** – working with the private rented sector, engagement to ensure properties that are poorly efficiency aim to meet higher energy efficiency standards, has resulted in supporting those in fuel poverty, as well as reducing carbon emissions. Eco craft days have been held throughout the year across our libraries within the borough, to engage families on fun ways to connect with climate change

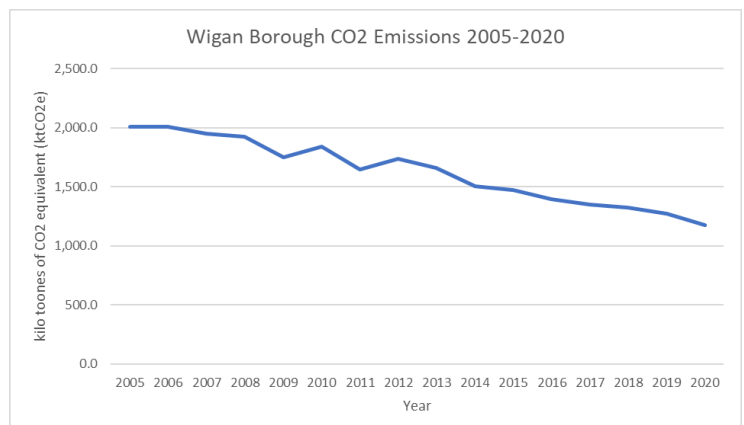
3. Section 3: Greenhouse Gas Emissions monitoring

3.1. Wigan Council reports on its organisational emissions through three different scopes; Scope 1 includes all gas used in corporate buildings, and all fuel used in fleet vehicles. Scope 2 includes the purchased electricity used in corporate buildings and streetlighting. Scope 3 emissions include purchased goods and services, business travel, employee commuting and homeworking etc. Only scope 1 and 2 emissions are comparable to previous years due to the additional data included each year for scope 3 emissions.



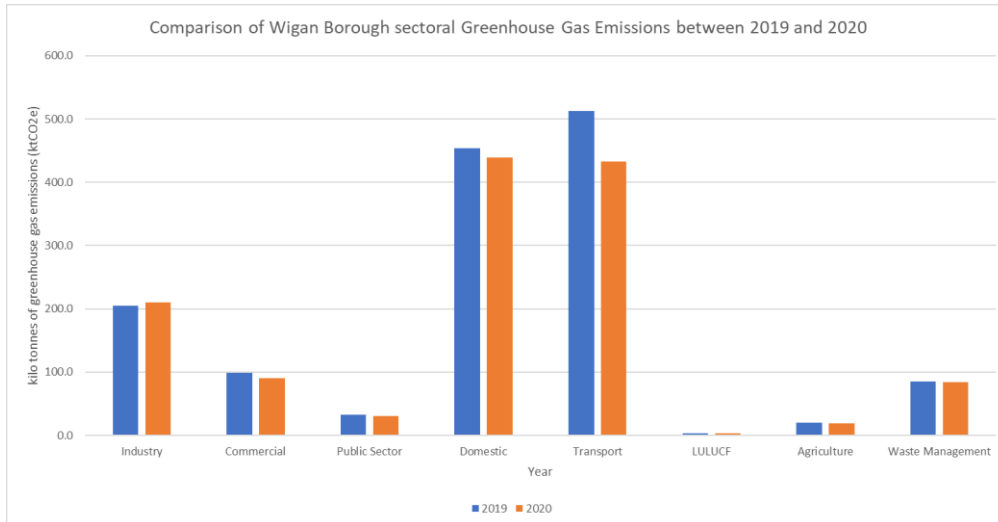
3.2. Although we have seen a reduction in scope 1 and 2 emissions from 2009, this is largely due to changes in the national power mix with a shift away from a reliance on coal, to cleaner forms of energy. Approximately 84% of the Council’s emissions come from our supply chain, including all purchased goods and services. In order to target Net Zero measures, we have to engage much more strongly in how the Council procures goods and services and ensure that this is a sustainable process.

3.3. Wigan borough emissions are monitored through annual data released by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy each year. In 2022 we received the data from the first year of the pandemic in 2020, as the national datasets are so large it takes almost 2 years to apportion this down to the local level. So in 2023, we will receive the data for 2021. In 2020, Wigan borough’s emissions reduced by 7.7% and have decreased for the 8th year in a row from 2012. However, a national reduction of 9% was observed due to the impacts of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, therefore Wigan borough’s emissions reductions fall short of the national average.



3.4. Observing the sectors across Wigan borough, the sector with the biggest reduction in emissions was transport, due to fewer people utilising vehicles throughout 2020. This is significant as the transport sector is the only sector to have remained stagnant in

previous years, with no real reductions. The transport sector is also responsible for the highest number of emissions within Wigan borough. Therefore the scale of the challenge highlights that there needs to be a shift away from private vehicle dominance on the roads, to more sustainable forms of transport, in order to reach Net Zero.



4. Section 4: Priority actions for 2022/23

4.1. Over the next 12 months, Wigan Council have a number of priority actions to focus on including examples such as:

- Develop a Net Zero science-based timeline to 2038, focussing on key organisational emissions reductions for the Council
- Further develop and facilitate the Wigan Climate Coalition, to bring as many partners as possible together across the borough, to take climate action
- Prioritise sustainable procurement and supply chain emissions
- Deliver Climate Awareness Training, aiming to achieve a target of 33% of the workforce to be Climate Aware
- Support the delivery of a Youth Climate Strategy for the borough
- Develop a climate change risk assessment to embed within all decision-making processes within the Council

Relevance Check

Budget Reduction/Service Area: Climate Response Team

Service Lead: Kerrell Boardman

Date: 11/11/2022

In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?

N/A

If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service you provide?

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed? No