

Local Authorities: Progress on Plans for reaching Climate Neutrality as at May 2019

Eighty or more Local Authorities covering some 25 million residents have so far declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to achieve a zero carbon area by a certain date. Some have made outline plans, usually building on work they have already done. Some of the plans are more specific than others – this is understandable given that many councils have only just adopted their target. Some do and some do not include “scope 3” emissions arising outside the area from goods and services consumed within it.

Some common themes are:

- The need for public engagement. However, I have not located any plan that spells out how this is to be achieved.
- The urgent need for firm policy guidance from Central Government, supported by Central Government investment and funding.
- The vital role of the Local Plan in setting requirements for development.

Here are some examples of what’s going on in some local authorities, with links to plans and other relevant documents:

Bristol City Council

2018: Council announced “City Leap”: a call for partners in a series of energy and infrastructure investment opportunities to help deliver carbon neutral Bristol by 2050, aiming to attract at least £1billion investment in energy projects. This received more than 180 expressions of interest.

https://www.energyservicebristol.co.uk/wp-content/pdf/City_Leap_Prospectus%204-5-18.pdf

Climate Emergency was declared in November 2018, bringing forward the date for climate neutrality from 2050 to 2030.

Following this, and soft market testing of the City Leap expressions of interest, the council decided to deliver City Leap via a joint venture with a strategic partner.

In January 2019 Bristol’s Green councillors published “Change Starts Now” , a routemap to carbon neutral Bristol 2030 including scopes 1, 2 & 3 emissions: <https://www.bristolgreenparty.org.uk/library/ChangeStartsNow.pdf>.

An Implementation Plan will be published on Monday 8th July and discussed at Full Council on 16th July. It will build on work already achieved and include:

- Embedding the 2030 goal across Bristol City Council including staff training, inclusion of a section on reaching the 2030 goal within all reports and a clear plan for how to ensure that staff from all departments are involved in helping the Council reach its goal.
- A structure for gathering and analysing the existing research and expertise that already exists and a plan to develop strategic priorities for decarbonising.
- A strategy for developing the detailed and technical plans that each department will need to play their part.
- An outline for how the cross-party working group will work and be organised, and how it will feed into the process.
- A stakeholder programme to work with communities, businesses, experts and other stakeholders from across the city to coordinate joint work, develop a shared understanding of the situation and build

cooperation across the city.

- A plan for how to work with WECA and North Somerset to implement joint decarbonisation work and leverage additional funding.
- A strategy to enable and resource the Council's finance team to work on a fundraising and financing plan and look at the option of carbon budgeting.
- A public awareness and communications campaign to engage communities, neighbourhoods and the media.
 - Developing a system for monitoring and evaluating progress.
 - Initial list of additional powers and/or funding that need to be delivered by central government.
 - A process for ensuring Bristol is part of all relevant national and international city networks working and sharing best practice on decarbonisation.

Oxfordshire County Council

On 2 April 2019, Oxfordshire County Council called on the Leader to:

1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency';
2. Pledge to make Oxfordshire County Council carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;
3. Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;
4. Continue to work with partners across the county and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies;
5. Report to Council within six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency."

Oxford City Council

January 2019: Climate Emergency declared.

29 April 2019: Oxford City Council voted to 'call on the Government to provide the powers and resources to fully decarbonise the [council] in the shortest timeframe working towards the vision of zero carbon by 2030 at the latest'.

Some of the actions already in progress in Oxford:

- 2010 Oxford city council set up and core funded "Low Carbon Oxford" partnership to reduce emissions by 40% by 2020. Steering group meets several times a year.
- 2017 City and County Councils announced plans to introduce world-first zero emission zone in town centre in stages starting from 2020
- May 2018 City Council awarded £475,000 by Innovate UK to install pop-up on-street electric charging points.
- £800,000 OLEV funding for electric charging points.
- £500,000 Government funding for taxi charging points
- £1.7m Government funding to upgrade buses
- August 2018 Oxford City Council, Greenpeace and FoE launched "Charter for Cleaner Air" calling on central government to use investment, tax system, legislation and a publicity campaign to reduce air pollution.

The City Council will now commission research to develop options and timescales for carbon reduction in areas such as housing and transport, and will put them to a randomly selected Citizens' Assembly meeting in September 2019.

Cornwall County Council

In January 2019, Cornwall Council declared a climate emergency and called on Westminster to provide the powers and resources necessary to achieve the target for Cornwall to become carbon neutral by 2030.

A "Connecting Cornwall" transport and environment plan was published in 2017:

https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/30276168/ltp3_2010_part2_nov17.pdf. A new report is in preparation.

Stroud District Council

In 2015 Stroud District Council declared itself the first carbon neutral local authority in Europe in terms of its own estate and operations.

On 16 November 2018, Council pledged to "do everything within the Council's power to make Stroud District Carbon Neutral by 2030".

"The Environment Committee at which this motion was approved was probably unique in the history of Stroud District Council in terms of the number of local citizens attending the meeting in support of the Council rather than in opposition of something the Council was doing."

The Council's environmental policy was reviewed in 2019.

Its environmental strategy was reviewed in December 2018 after a public consultation which demonstrated overwhelming public support for the four environmental priorities of

- Promoting a circular economy
- Mitigating climate change
- Protecting the Environment
- Planning for sustainable communities

Most of the projects linked to the Environmental Strategy are set out in the Corporate Delivery Plan. Key Actions for 2018/19 were:

- Phase out the use single use plastics across the council and those use by our contractors and suppliers
- Introduce cost saving measures for grounds maintenance, building cleaning and waste collection
- Implement the cycling and walking plan focused on: Saul – Stonehouse - Stroud - Brimscombe, Stroud - Nailsworth and Cam – Dursley – Uley
- Refurbish Stratford Park Outdoor Pool (Lido) and zero or low carbon technologies to heat the pool water
- Agree a long term investment and management plan for Stratford Park with partners and contractors
- Complete the award winning council house building programme
- Carry out up to £6.7m of planned work to council homes, helping tackle fuel poverty
- Provide support for households in fuel poverty to install efficient and affordable heating
- Review the Local Plan

Stroud District Council's draft Implementation Plan for its 2030 target outlines the economic benefits of progressing to carbon neutrality, the main risks associated with climate change and the measures required of Stroud DC to combat them, the changes required to reach carbon neutrality, actions required in connection with energy generation, demand management and energy efficiency, the need for a transformation of transport, reductions in emissions from waste, changes to land management, and changes required to the local plan. It stresses the need for target setting and partnership working, with the Council providing leadership.

file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Implementation%20of%20Climate%20Change%20Motion_ver_14.pdf

Stroud District Council stresses the importance of using the revision of the Local Plan to set sufficiently high energy performance criteria for all new-build housing from the time of adoption of the revised Local Plan in 2021, and of setting an example by ensuring that all new housing built on council-owned land and council housing is built to a standard that ensures zero net carbon emissions. This may be through modular construction and would probably include PV and energy storage and enable smart home technology.

Stroud DC has used an Environmental Management System since 1996 and will use this to implement its environmental policy, integrating it into the corporate management framework to apply to all the Council's activities including contracted-out services as new contracts are negotiated, and to set objectives and implement action programmes in order to minimise the negative environmental effects and increase the positive effects of Council activities. The Council is working towards ISO 14001:2015, the international standard that specifies the requirements for an EMS.

Nottingham Council

January 2019: target of climate neutrality by 2028 adopted. Work is being done towards a long-term citywide sustainable development strategy which will set out a positive vision for a sustainable future for Nottingham.

Nottingham has a long history of accessing funding and investment in environmental projects and of innovative action on reducing energy use.

Projects already achieved include:

- Establishing a large in-house energy team which generates income.
- Using powers under Transport Act 2000 to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy in 2012. This costs £500,000 pa to administer and raises £9m a year for public transport.
- Providing environmental education resources for schools:
SCORE Schools Collaboration on Resource Efficiency – energy efficiency surveys, action plans, assemblies etc
WISE Waste in School Education waste reduction and environmental education
NCC collaborates with EDF Energy's "The Pod" to access EDF educational resources, promote EcoSchools and education about energy and waste
- Setting up Vehicle-to-Grid project for NCC vehicle fleet (in progress)
- The Nottingham District Heating scheme, which has been running for 20 years. It is managed by an ESCO wholly owned by Nottingham City Council. Heat from waste-to-energy plant is piped to domestic and commercial customers across the city centre by 85km of pipes.

- The low energy Trent Basin housing development is under construction with solar energy, battery storage and high quality low-emission homes. The scheme has been supported with £6.3 million funding from the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) and Innovate UK.
- EU -funded energy storage project on The Meadows housing estate
- Energiesprong demonstration scheme retrofitting council houses with external insulation plus ground source heat pumps, with EU funding.
- Solar panels fitted to some of the city's 26,000 council houses and 4,000 upgraded with external insulation using ECO, green deal and NCC funding. External insulation on to 2,000 private houses with ECO funding.
- Robin Hood Energy, a council-owned not-for-profit company.

While demonstrator projects have required public funding, the overall approach to all of the projects in Nottingham is to develop subsidy-free business models that will enable the right investment to be made at scale across the city.

Leeds City Council

March 2019: Committed to carbon neutrality by 2030

Leader of the Council Judith Blake says: "What we have to do is make sure that every single decision we take across this council - whether it be transport, health, housing, planning or poverty reduction - that we embed sustainability in our decision making."

In partnership with Northern Gas Networks and funded by BEIS, Leeds CC is working on making Leeds the first UK city to replace natural gas with hydrogen, reducing the region's carbon emissions by 11%.

Recent initiatives have included the Leeds PIPES district heating scheme and the Clean Air Zone.

In April 2019 Leeds Climate Commission (Chair from University, Vice-Chair from Leeds Council) published a report on routes to a carbon-neutral Leeds by 2050. The report also shows that the 2030 target could be achieved, if behavioural actions that make a global contribution are also accounted for. These include reducing food waste by 80%, a 33% decrease in meat and dairy consumption and a 33% decrease in steel and concrete use by 2030.

<http://leeds.candocities.org/sites/default/files/Leeds%20Carbon%20Roadmap%20v4.pdf>.

Manchester City Council

In October 2018, in the light of IPCC 1.5°, Manchester City Council published "Playing Our Full Part ":

<http://www.manchesterclimate.com/sites/default/files/POFP%20Proposal%20to%20MCC%2016.10.2018%20high%20res.pdf>

In November 2018 MCC adopted the Tyndall Centre's recommendations of a 15m tonne carbon budget for 2018-2100; rapid carbon reduction, starting in 2018, including a 50% reduction by 2022 from 2018 levels, and averaging 13% year-on-year; and zero carbon by 2038. These targets are based on a 2° temperature rise, not 1.5°. Manchester does not include Scope 3 emissions in its targets.

Tyndall Centre Report:

<http://www.manchesterclimate.com/sites/default/files/Manchester%20Carbon%20Budget.pdf>

In February 2019 Manchester City Council published the Draft Manchester Zero Carbon Framework, developed by the Manchester Climate Change Board, outlining how the targets were to be achieved. The

work to develop the draft Framework during November 2018 to February 2019 engaged over 60 organisations directly responsible for approximately 20% of the city's emissions. In an appendix to the Framework, some of these organisations set out their commitments for the short and medium term and specify what support they need. The organisations include the City Council itself, which lists its support needs as follows:

- Work with partners across the city such as TfGM and the GMCA to bring forward projects that will reduce carbon emissions.
- Build the technical expertise within the Council to deliver programmes.
- Seek innovative funding models and explore national and international opportunities for investment and collaboration.
- Lobby Government to accelerate the decarbonisation of the national grid and provide financial support and incentives for the deployment of green technologies to reduce emissions e.g. solar PV, domestic and commercial retrofit, electric vehicles and charging infrastructure

<https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s5005/Appendix%201%20Manchester%20Zero%20Carbon%20Framework%202020-38.pdf>

<https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s5006/Appendix%202%20Manchester%20Zero%20Carbon%20Framework%202020-38.pdf>

The Climate Change Board, its individual members, and Manchester City Council are now engaging with the bodies and sectors responsible for the remaining 80% and preparing for delivery of an action plan from 2020.

Businesses will be encouraged to sign a commitment to action:
<http://www.manchesterclimate.com/content/commitment-act>

Manchester Climate Change Agency has published "Tips to Contribute to a Zero Carbon City"
<http://www.manchesterclimate.com/content/tips-contribute-zero-carbon-city>

Manchester City Council has not declared a climate emergency, and environmental group Steady State Manchester has criticised the targets and proposed actions as being too weak.

<https://steadystatemanchester.net/2018/12/12/manchesters-climate-change-strategy-all-co2-and-mirrors/>

Greater Manchester

Like Manchester City, Greater Manchester has adopted a goal of annual average of 15% cuts in emissions leading to carbon neutrality by 2038.

There are links to Greater Manchester's various environment-related plans here:
<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/>

A Five Year Environment Plan 2019-2024 was launched March 2019:

https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1986/5-year-plan-branded_3.pdf

Under the headings of Energy, Transport, Homes/Workplaces/Public Buildings, Production and Consumption of Resources, Natural Environment, and Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change, suggested actions by Local Authorities, Residents, Businesses and Central Government are set out.

Under the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, all new buildings are to be net zero carbon by 2028, but the authority is working with Green Building Council to see whether the date can be brought forward.

Exeter City Council

Exeter's Climate Change Action Plan 2008-2018:

<http://committees.exeter.gov.uk/documents/s2441/Climate%20Change%20Strategy%20Appendix%20II.pdf>

It's not clear whether Exeter has declared climate emergency or a carbon neutral target but the council has a very practical approach to reducing Exeter's climate impact.

For the past ten years, all new building by the City Council has been to Passivhaus standards and designed to be climate resilient to at least 2080:

<https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/news/articles/20181/passivhaus-exeter-city-council-leading-by-example>

<https://www.houseplanninghelp.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Exeter-City-Council-Scheme-Information.pdf>

In 2015 the Council adopted the Exeseed contractors' framework to facilitate engaging and training contractors and optimising procurement processes. The framework is available to all public bodies. Eleven contractors have signed up <https://exeter.gov.uk/media/2514/exeseed-framework-manual.pdf>
[https://chcymru.org.uk/uploads/events_attachments/Exeter City Councils Experiences.pdf](https://chcymru.org.uk/uploads/events_attachments/Exeter_City_Councils_Experiences.pdf)

2018: formation of a new Council Owned Development Company, Exeter City Living, to upscale the pace of development and offer a wider tenure of exemplar homes including open market homes and market rent.

Some Resources and Documents

“ Net Zero”: the Committee on Climate Change report, May 2019

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>

This report recommends a date of 2050 for achieving a carbon neutral UK and so cannot be regarded as an adequate response to the climate emergency, although it is an advance on the Government's current 80% target. As the IPCC has made clear, and local authorities understand, we do not have 30 years to solve this problem.

The Committee states that the recommendations in the report *“If replicated across the world, and coupled with ambitious near-term reductions in emissions . . . would deliver a greater than 50% chance of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C. and a greater than 66% probability of warming below 2°C”*. It is remarkable that the eminent members of the Committee are prepared to take this gamble, especially when in some places their practical recommendations seem very modest – e.g. in the case of aviation. Getting to nearly zero by 2050 allows for a 60% increase in passenger demand above 2005 levels by 2050!

Despite all that, the report is full of very useful facts and figures, research, suggestions and authoritative recommendations.

The Committee sees only a limited role for local government in addressing the climate emergency: *“Cities and local authorities are well placed to understand the needs and opportunities in their local area, although there are questions over whether they have sufficient resources to contribute strongly to reducing emissions. They have important roles on transport planning, including providing high-quality infrastructure for walking and cycling, provision of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, and ensuring that new housing developments are designed for access to public transport. They can improve health outcomes for people who live and work in the area by implementing clean-air zones that discourage use of polluting vehicles and other technologies”.*

The Committee states that:

“Our conclusion that the UK can achieve a net-zero GHG target by 2050 and at acceptable cost is entirely contingent on the introduction of clear, stable and well-designed policies. Government must set the direction and provide the urgency.”

Carbon Brief <https://www.carbonbrief.org/> Sign up to get a daily email with summaries of the most important articles on climate change from the international press and specialist journals, as well as Carbon Brief’s own research

APSE (Association of Public Sector Excellence) Briefing on Climate Emergency Declarations:

<file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/19-23%20Climate%20Emergency%20Council%20Declarations.pdf>

A Civic Plan for a Climate Emergency – Prof Paul Chatterton

[file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/A%20Civic%20Plan%20for%20a%20Climate%20Emergency%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/A%20Civic%20Plan%20for%20a%20Climate%20Emergency%20(1).pdf)

38 Actions Local Authorities can take on Climate Change – Friends of the Earth

<https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/33-actions-local-authorities-can-take-climate-change>

Low Emission Taxi Guide for LAs - Energy saving Trust

[file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/LowCVP Low Emission Taxi Guide-March 2019 Update%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/LowCVP%20Low%20Emission%20Taxi%20Guide-March%202019%20Update%20(1).pdf)

Some Forthcoming Events

Oxford Green Week 8th – 16th June <https://oxfordgreenweek.org/events/>

- Tour of anaerobic digester 10-12 Tues 11th June
- Tour of Kings Farm Close development of 15 low-carbon houses 5-7 Weds 12th June
- Oxford EV Show (big event) 10-5 Sat 15th June in Broad Street
- Springfield Meadows Open Day (25 low carbon houses) 10-4 Sat 15th June
- and many other events

APSE is holding a National Policy Seminar in Liverpool on 12th July 2019, which will explore the climate change agenda and local authority Climate Emergency declarations. To reserve a place in advance for this seminar “Climate Emergency: How is your Council responding”, email vstarmer@apse.org.uk.

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