

Birmingham City Council

City Council

04 February 2020



Subject: Climate Emergency Interim Report

Report of: Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment

Report author: Ian MacLeod, Interim Director, Inclusive Growth

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :

1 Introduction

- 1.1 On 11 June 2019, following a [cross-party motion](#), a climate emergency was declared at Full Council and the target was set for the Council and city to be carbon neutral¹ by 2030, or as soon as possible thereafter as a 'just transition' permits.
- 1.2 This emphasises the need to ensure the transition to a net zero carbon and resilient economy has a strong social dimension, bringing the city's communities with us and mitigating potential negative socio-economic impacts. This is the Council's and city's 'route to zero' (R20).
- 1.3 The Council is committed to taking a leading role to tackle the climate crisis. Meeting this challenge and achieving the 2030 ambition will require widespread support and transformative action both locally and nationally.
- 1.4 We want everyone in the city to be empowered to respond to the climate emergency to ensure that Birmingham is a place in which all of our residents can lead healthy, sustainable, safe, and fulfilling lives.

¹It's difficult to stop all carbon emitting activities. Achieving 'net zero carbon' (or being 'carbon neutral') aims to 'balance' emissions by cutting them where we can, and introducing measures to prevent emissions we cannot avoid from entering the atmosphere. This is called 'offsetting' emissions.

1.5 The initial aspiration was made to bring a report and recommendations to Full Council in January 2020 which sets out how the city can achieve the 2030 ambition. This has been deferred until June 2020 to allow for the following:

- To establish an up to date and robust evidence base for the sources of the Council's and city's carbon emissions;
- To understand the local impacts of the climate emergency and how the city will need to adapt;
- To collaborate with partners and draw on regional, national and international expertise to identify, explore, test, and recommend potential carbon reduction interventions;
- To engage with the people of Birmingham and ensure their voices are heard and can inform the development of the action plan;
- To develop an in-depth understanding of the socio-economic impact of potential interventions; and,
- To allow for further engagement and testing of potential interventions with citizens.

1.6 This interim report is therefore intended as a Council update on the progress made since the climate emergency declaration ahead of the full report in June. This will be a collaborative and shared report which sets out a collective approach for how the city as a whole can tackle the climate crisis and work towards the 2030 target.

1.7 This update focusses on the work to date of the R20 Taskforce, the Council's service area reviews, and external consultancy support. These are key strands that are informing the development of the June report.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That Council notes the progress made so far against the commitments in the June 2019 Full Council motion and notes that a full report on the R20 recommendations will be considered at Full Council in June 2020.

3 Background

3.1 The climate is the long term pattern of day-to-day weather. Our food and water supplies depend on stable seasonal patterns of temperature, rain, and wind in the UK and elsewhere. In the last 100 years the earth's average temperature

has increased faster than previously seen – this is known as global warming or global heating.

- 3.2 Evidence shows that human activity and our use of fuels like petrol, diesel, gas, and coal is highly likely to be the main cause of global warming. When these fuels are burned they release greenhouse gases which trap heat in the earth's atmosphere, causing the air and seas to heat up which changes the climate – these are also known as carbon emissions. Current levels of greenhouse gases are higher than they have been over the last 800,000 years and they are rising rapidly.
- 3.3 The climate emergency is a real and significant threat that requires us to change the way we invest in, grow, and sustain our cities and regions.
- 3.4 The United Nations (UN) released a [report](#) in October 2018 on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. Global warming is highly likely to reach 1.5 °C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.
- 3.5 An increase of 1.5 °C will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat, and climate-related poverty for hundreds of millions of people across the world. Sea level rise, biodiversity impacts, and loss of agricultural productivity are also expected.
- 3.6 The UN report warned that we may have just twelve years left from 2018 (the date of publication) to limit a climate crisis. The environment, economy, and our communities will be severely affected without significant changes to the way we live, work, and move around.
- 3.7 In Birmingham we are already seeing direct negative impacts climate change is having on people and places. For example, extreme weather is affecting our health and wellbeing, which animals and plants can survive, and what food can be grown.
- 3.8 This means that urgent and unprecedented action is needed world-wide and in Birmingham to slow down human-caused global warming and restore the stability of the climate, enabling eco-systems and existing and future generations to survive and thrive.
- 3.9 The Council recognises that change on a significant scale is needed if the city is to reduce its carbon emissions at the required rate and scale. The Council is committed to taking a leading role, playing its part, and working with individuals,

communities, businesses, partners, and others across the city and region to act now on the causes and impacts of climate change.

3.10 This commitment was cemented by the declaration of a climate emergency at Full Council on 11 June 2019. The ambition was then set for the Council and city to become carbon neutral by 2030, or as soon as possible thereafter as a 'just transition' permits.

3.11 On 25 June 2019 Cabinet agreed to add a new priority to the [Council Plan](#) which states that Birmingham will be a city that takes a leading role in tackling climate change. This commitment will embed climate action in the Council's decision-making process to make sure that all service areas contribute to the R20 journey.

3.12 Responding to the climate emergency presents us with an opportunity for positive change for the city. Bold climate action and delivering cleaner and more sustainable growth by transitioning to a low carbon economy is widely acknowledged to bring about major economic, social, and health benefits.

4 Local, national and global context

4.1 Momentum to respond to the climate emergency is building across the world. In the UK over 60% of local authorities as well as the UK parliament have declared a climate emergency.

4.2 Different areas and institutions have set different targets for reducing their carbon emissions. Birmingham's target for becoming carbon neutral is 2030 while the target for the region (as set by the West Midlands Combined Authority) is 2041. The target for the country as a whole (as set by UK parliament) is 2050.

4.3 We know that urgent action is needed to reduce global carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 to prevent global warming exceeding 1.5 °C. Therefore, what matters most, irrespective of specific targets, is the rate of reduction to reduce carbon emissions as quickly as possible.

4.4 The Council takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and its work to ensure Birmingham is a great, clean and green city to live in was ongoing prior to the June 2019 declaration of a climate emergency.

4.5 In 2013 the Council set a previous target to reduce carbon emissions in the city by 60% by 2027. The most up to date [national data](#) (from 2017) shows that

good progress is being made against this target and Birmingham's direct carbon emissions have decreased by 38.6% against 1990 levels.

4.6 This data shows that the total carbon emissions for Birmingham in 2017 were 4.222m tonnes, where:

- 34.4% were from domestic
- 33.8% were from industry and commercial sectors
- 31.8% were from transport

5 Full Council motion – further commitments

5.1 A number of commitments were included in the June 2019 Full Council motion (in addition to declaring a climate emergency and setting the 2030 net zero ambition).

5.2 These commitments include:

- Constituting a climate emergency taskforce.
- Reviewing transport, housing, waste, and energy investment plans and policies to ensure they are fit to support a transition to a zero-carbon future.
- Establishing a process of engagement and collaborative action that enables the development of a carbon reduction action plan, ensuring we develop approaches that are in line with regional work.
- Working with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and seek from the UK Government the powers and resources to help Birmingham deliver the 2030 net zero carbon ambition for a just transition.

5.3 Progress made against these commitments is outlined in the sections below.

6 Constitution of a climate emergency taskforce

6.1 The R20 Taskforce was set up in autumn 2019 to support the Council move from declaration to delivery – drawing in cross-party and cross-sector expertise, capacity, and capability to ensure we can capture the investment and economic opportunities arising from a low carbon future.

6.2 The Taskforce brings together Members and officers from the Council and representatives from the WMCA, NHS, higher education, business, faith communities, the third sector, youth climate strikers, climate campaigners, and other key stakeholders (see appendix 1 for the R20 Terms of Reference and membership list).

- 6.3 The Taskforce is working together to provide a voice for the city and inform the development of an action plan for how Birmingham can tackle climate change and reduce its carbon emissions to become net zero carbon by 2030.
- 6.4 The first Taskforce was held on 17 October 2019 and the meeting focussed on agreeing the group's role in relation to the wider R20 work and setting out the broad approach and timeline. Members committed to a way of working that is both inclusive and collaborative to help drive system change.
- 6.5 Between December 2019 and February 2020 workshops are being held with the Taskforce and other partners to explore potential carbon reduction interventions for consideration for the action plan. Areas of focus for these discussions include, for example, housing, education, employment, skills, and transport.
- 6.6 Key lines of enquiry have been drafted in collaboration with Taskforce members (appendix 2) and will be explored throughout the duration of this work to help shape discussions, direct effort, and inform the development of the recommendations. The key lines of enquiry are working drafts and will continue to evolve as this agenda progresses.
- 6.7 Outside of formal Taskforce sessions, Taskforce members continue to drive this agenda across the city and wider region. For example, through developing their own sustainability and environmental frameworks and strategies and carrying out programmes of community engagement.

7 Baseline report, scenario modelling, and impact and viability assessments

- 7.1 In the July 2019 Cabinet report, the need for external consultancy support was identified to support the R20 work to ensure our baseline and methodology is comparable with other core cities and is transferable and translatable to other authorities in the region.
- 7.2 Detailed scoping work was carried out and a technical study has been commissioned. The contract was awarded to Anthesis in January 2020 and the study is being undertaken between January and March 2020.
- 7.3 This work will establish a robust and coherent evidence-base for the city's levels and sources of carbon emissions on which to substantiate recommendations for potential carbon reduction interventions. It will also

identify, explore, and test potential carbon reduction interventions and seek to understand the relative socio-economic impacts and the viability of these potential interventions.

7.4 This study will happen in parallel with the work of the Taskforce, internal service area reviews, and public engagement.

7.5 The findings from the study will inform the proposed approach for reducing the city's carbon emissions and will be used for further explorative work with communities.

8 Internal service area reviews

8.1 A further commitment in the climate emergency motion was to review investment plans and policies across key service areas to ensure they are fit to support a transition to a zero-carbon future.

8.2 Six operational work streams have been established for transport, housing, waste, energy, green and blue infrastructure, and developing the green economy. The aims of the service area reviews is to:

- Review current policy and initiatives in terms of moving towards sustainable solutions (including focussing on what initiatives, resources, assets, etc. we currently have and how we can employ these in the short term for maximum impact); and,
- Explore how we build on this in the longer term to move towards net zero carbon for 2030 (including exploring what this means for investment, regulation, policy, practice, and legislation and considering what can be done at local, regional, and national level).

8.3 The Council will also undertake a review of planning policy and a separate report will be provided in relation to the parameters for any future planning policy changes. This work will include reviewing other local authorities' sustainability policies to ensure we set ambitious standards in Birmingham.

8.4 Part of the role of the leads of the operational work streams is to act as a link with external bodies to ensure we can identify and maximise opportunities for collaboration. Each work stream is being led by a senior officer from the respective service area with oversight from Ian MacLeod (Interim Director, Inclusive Growth).

- 8.5 These themes are being used to frame action planning workshops with the Taskforce, ensuring these discussions are underpinned by the requirement for whole system change and enabling us to fully explore and harness regional and national opportunities.
- 8.6 This work will happen in parallel to the consultancy work and will help to improve coordination across the Council, enabling us to build an informed understanding and a coherent, single narrative around what's already happening to inform our approach moving forwards on the R20 journey.
- 8.7 Early findings from these service area reviews, including key challenges and opportunities, were presented to the Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 December 2019 (appendix 3). More detailed reporting will be brought to the Committee in March and May 2020.

9 Communications, engagement, and collaborative action

- 9.1 A further commitment in the climate emergency motion was to establish a process of engagement and collaborative action that enables the development of the R20 action plan, ensuring we develop approaches that are in line with regional work.
- 9.2 Ensuring we engage widely with our communities, businesses, partners, and others across the city is paramount if we are to achieve the required widespread behaviour and cultural shifts across all parts of society and all areas of the city.
- 9.3 We need to work with our different communities to understand their needs and drivers and enable them to shape what they think a sustainable future should look like to bring them with us and ensure a just transition.
- 9.4 This section presents a brief overview of Council-led communications and engagement, partner-led engagement, and key opportunities for collaborative action that are being explored.

Council-led communications and engagement

- 9.5 The Council has developed a communications and engagement strategy for the R20 work. This sets out a phased and blended approach which correlates with the stages of the R20 project timeline.
- 9.6 For phases 1 and 2 (December 2019 to March 2020) we will be engaging with residents in order to:

- Gauge people’s understanding of the climate emergency and the causes and impacts of climate change;
- Increase people’s awareness of climate change and encourage them to recognise that tackling climate change is a shared responsibility;
- Encourage individual behaviour change; and,
- Provide people with the opportunity to put forward suggestions for how the city can respond to the climate emergency.

9.7 Upon completion of the report in June 2020, phase 3 will begin to provide a broader and more intensive form of engagement aligned with the recommendations and action plan.

9.8 Communications and engagement activity includes:

- ‘Two-way’ communication via social media
- An online [Climate Emergency Citizen Survey](#) hosted on the ‘Be Heard’ website
- Focus groups with a variety of socio-economic groups, including those who may be harder to engage
- Climate change community champions
- Utilising internal communication channels

9.9 As part of the R20 engagement programme we are building on the engagement activity being undertaken around the Clean Air Zone. We are also working closely with the WMCA to ensure alignment with their public engagement on their climate action green paper (launched for consultation in January 2020).

9.10 On 31 January 2020 a communications and engagement workshop was held with members of the Taskforce and Council and WMCA officers to explore in more detail how the strategy could be implemented – particularly focussing on engagement with the public post-publication of the June report.

Taskforce and partner-led communications and engagement

9.11 Taskforce members and their networks have been convening extensive programmes of engagement across the city and region and we’re working with members to collate findings from these sessions to share and build on learning.

9.12 Places in Common is engaging with communities to support the development of a low carbon ecosystem in the city region and as part of the development of

citizen-centred and community-driven approaches to policy innovation on climate action. A report on their findings is due in early 2020.

Collaborative action

9.13 The leads of the operational work streams are playing a key role in acting as a link with external bodies to ensure we can identify and maximise opportunities for collaboration.

9.14 For example, discussions are underway to explore opportunities with the WMCA, universities in the city, and others to ensure regional strategic alignment across partners and build capacity internally. Potential opportunities currently include secondments, working with communities to create a bespoke Birmingham-specific carbon calculator, and joining up efforts around communications and engagement.

9.15 Plans are underway to hold a Birmingham Climate Assembly in spring/summer 2020 and more details will be released in due course.

The national picture

9.16 A group of Parliamentary Select Committees are holding a [national Climate Assembly](#) in Birmingham between January and March 2020. This presents a unique opportunity to boost public awareness of and engagement in the climate emergency in the city and region.

10 Developing the recommendations and action plan

10.1 The recommendations for how the city can reduce its carbon emissions will be informed by the work undertaken by the Taskforce, service area reviews, consultants, and others, and will draw on findings and learning from national and global good practice as well as the testing of interventions with communities.

10.2 It will set out practical and deliverable recommendations for mitigation and adaptation for the whole city (including individuals, communities, businesses, partners, the Council, and others) and national government to ensure we can bring about the transformational changes that are required to reduce the city's carbon emissions and ensure our communities can benefit from a low carbon future.

11 The Council's early commitments

11.1 Moving towards R20 will require a series of transitions. A number of early commitments have been made for actions the Council can begin to progress ahead of the June report.

11.2 These early commitments are set out in the table below with further detail included (where applicable) in appendix 4.

Theme	No.	Commitment	Anticipated start date and timescales
Transport	1	Undertake awareness campaigns targeting the highest polluting trips and users to encourage people to reduce their carbon footprint from transport (for example, increasing awareness of people's travel choices and promoting behavioural change)	2020-21
	2	Explore additional policy measures, such as the evaluation of transport interventions and the creation of a carbon fund	2020-21
	3	The Council to lead by example in adopting and supporting low-carbon transport practices (for example, awareness raising campaigns with staff and reducing business mileage)	2020 onwards
Green and blue infrastructure	4	Undertake a feasibility study looking at early interventions to enhance the Cole Valley Corridor, including Glebe Farm Recreation Ground	2020
	5	Improve information and data on webpages	2020
	6	Nature Recovery Network/Natural Capital Mapping to support effective mitigation and enhancement measures	2020

Theme	No.	Commitment	Anticipated start date and timescales
	7	Urban Forest Management Policy – update technical note	2020
	8	Biochar investigation to consider the capture of carbon through the pyrolytic conversion of timber	2020
	9	Support other service areas in their delivery of R20 – particularly around transport and housing	2020
	10	Deliver training/awareness sessions to other service areas on broad green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity, and sustainability topics	2020
	11	Collaborate with partners to secure funding and deliver projects that contribute to overall R20 aims (for example, a Sky Park (a green walking route on the elevated, disused section of the viaduct running through Digbeth) and improvements to the River Rea to enhance the green corridor in the city centre)	2020 onwards
Energy	12	Commence the Heat Decarbonisation Delivery Plan (developed with BEIS)	2020
	13	The Council's Energy Strategy	2020 onwards
	14	Undertake a procurement review of energy supply to Council buildings	2020-23
	15	Develop a renewable energy electric charge point network	2020-22 (initial phase)

Theme	No.	Commitment	Anticipated start date and timescales
Housing	16	Initiate a Passivhaus (zero carbon house) pilot	2020-21
	17	Deliver a zero carbon retrofit conference exploring best practice and funding models	2020
	18	Develop a database of advice and a Communications Plan for providing zero carbon retrofit information to home owners, landlords and residents	2020-21
Developing the green economy	19	Commence a governance review with stakeholders to maximise the value of and investment in the Tyseley Environmental Enterprise District and the wider area	2020
	20	Develop a clear business offer related to Tyseley Energy Park to attract SME's and capital investment into the area	2020
	21	Deliver the CAZ Heavy Duty Vehicle Fund to support SME's to purchase and/or lease new compliant vehicles/retrofit non-compliant vehicles to achieve Euro 6 compliance and improve air quality	2020-23
	22	Undertake a detailed baseline study – including a market overview and identifying challenges, gaps in provision,] and opportunities	2020
Planning	23	Review and strengthen planning conditions relating to green and blue infrastructure	2020
	24	Review, strengthen and expand design	2020

Theme	No.	Commitment	Anticipated start date and timescales
		guide information relating to green and blue infrastructure, and links to low carbon, sustainability and biodiversity, low and zero carbon energy and sustainable construction	
	25	Commence a review of the Big City Plan	2020
Procurement and Contract Management	26	Commence a Council-wide Procurement and Contract Management strategy review (for new and existing contracts) to explore alignment with R20 principles	2020-21
Governance	27	Undertake a governance review to explore embedding environmental and sustainability principles in the Council's decision making process (for example, through environmental/climate impact assessments and appraisals)	2020
HR	28	Exploring opportunities to reduce workforce carbon emissions through changes in working practices (for example, through agile working and the use of technology to reduce the need to travel)	2020-21

11.3 In January 2020 the Council released a draft Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) (appendix 5) for public consultation.

11.4 The BTP sets out four proposed big moves:

- Reallocating road space away from cars
- Transforming the city centre
- Prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods
- Managing travel demand through parking measures

11.5 The ambition of the BTP has been supported by the Council's declaration of a climate emergency. The plan sets out a vision for a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere transport network. Adopting the BTP in the next 12 months will mean that Birmingham will have a clear blueprint that supports sustainable transport policies and measures until 2031 and beyond.

12 Resourcing

12.1 A report was brought to Cabinet on 30 July 2019 which set out estimated costs of between £150,000 and £180,000 to procure an external consultant to prepare a baseline report and complete other associated work to prepare for the development of the action plan.

12.2 More detailed resource planning was subsequently undertaken which identified the key resource requirements for the R20 project, detailed below:

- External consultancy – to prepare a baseline report, carry out scenario modelling, and impact and viability assessments
- Communications and engagement – to undertake a comprehensive Council-led communications and engagement programme
- Programme management – to manage the various work streams and associated activity of the R20 project and Taskforce

12.3 The revised estimated cost was £191,250 (£109,250 for 2019/20 and £82,000 for 2020/21).

12.4 Invest to Improve resources were identified as a potential funding source for the £109,250 required in 2019/20 and, in line with Council process, a report was taken to the Council Leadership Team on 25 November 2019 seeking agreement. This was duly provided and subsequently formally approved under delegation by the Council S151 Officer.

12.5 The additional resource requirement of £82,000 has been built into the Council's 2020/21 budget and will be subject to formal approval in February 2020.

12.6 Council resources are being aligned alongside contributions and existing activity from partners in the city.

12.7 The action plan and supporting information will help to build a business case for investment. Working with the WMCA we will be in a strong position to seek the necessary powers and resources from the UK government to help Birmingham deliver the 2030 ambition.

13 Timescales

- December 2019 to February 2020 – Taskforce action planning workshops
- December 2019 to March 2020 – Service area reviews

- December 2019 to March 2020 – Phases 1 and 2 of public communication and engagement
- January to March 2020 – Consultancy support to prepare a baseline report, scenario modelling, and impact and viability assessments
- January to March 2020 – National Climate Assembly (held in Birmingham)
- February 2020 – Interim report to Full Council
- March 2020 – Service area review update to Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- May 2020 – R20 update to Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- June 2020 – R20 recommendations to Full Council
- Spring/summer 2020 – Birmingham Climate Assembly
- TBC (post June 2020) – Phase 3 public communications and engagement