

Meeting:	Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency
Meeting date:	19/11/2024
Report of:	Claire Foale, Interim Director of City Development
Portfolio of:	Cllr Jenny Kent, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Decision Report: Update of Climate Change Action Plan

Subject of Report

1. The Climate Change Action Plan supports the York Climate Change Strategy and sets out the actions to be taken to reduce emissions and improve climate resilience in York. This Report presents the updated Action Plan for 2024.
2. This version has consolidated actions and focussed on making actions specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). Completed actions have been documented, with some actions being added or removed, with an accompanying explanation.
3. Approving the Action Plan sets a clear direction for the Council and city partners to progress activity towards our climate change ambition and opportunities for partnership working.

Benefits and Challenges

4. The updated Action Plan is a clearer and more concise plan of actions that the Council, and partners, can work to achieve. Many of the actions are already underway, either as one-off projects, trials or as 'business as usual' within the Council. It also identifies several actions that are being delivered by partner organisations across the city.

5. Individual actions contribute towards the net zero and climate ready ambition of the council, with indirect benefits identified within the plan, covering health, economy, skills and environment.
6. Actions have been categorised as focussing on either 'Adaptation' and/or 'Mitigation'. This reflects a wider understanding of the challenges faced by Climate Change and the growing need for adaptation actions and consideration of resilience measures to alleviate the worst impacts of climate change across the city.
7. The Action Plan contains actions that are not currently funded and/or do not have dedicated teams or staff members appointed to complete them. Funding and capacity are, therefore, identified as challenges to realising our climate change ambitions. While this is the case, the Action Plan still provides direction, shows the ambitions of the Council and allows other organisations in the city to work towards these actions.

Policy Basis for Decision

8. The Climate Change Action Plan was published in 2022, alongside the Climate Change Strategy, to demonstrate how the Council is working towards Net Zero by 2030. The Action Plan is itself part of the governance arrangements to track action, monitor progress, report annually and assign responsibility towards our climate change ambition.
9. The Action Plan draws strong links with Council's 10 Year Strategies for Health & Wellbeing and Economic Growth, and other Council strategies and policies covering transport, retrofit, tourism, skills and planning.
10. The Local Area Energy Plan has provided an evidence base of significant changes that need to go ahead across the city

Financial Strategy Implications

11. Many of the 82 actions within the action plan are already funded through ongoing work within council teams or through separate funding streams that teams have applied for. Some actions are yet to find funding or will be taken up by external organisations.

12. Implementation of some actions can also reduce costs for the council, organisations and city residents such as encouraging transport modal shift or improving energy efficiency of buildings.

Recommendation and Reasons

13. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - i. Approve the refreshed Climate Change Action Plan and revert to biennial updates (Option 3).

Reason

The updated action plan is more in-line with current Council actions and those that can be achieved in the next few years. The updated Action Plan covers both mitigation and adaptation actions, providing a more comprehensive reflection of activity to support our climate change objectives.

A biennial update reduces the resource requirements on the team and will allow for a more detailed revision, with full consultation and continuous improvement of the Action Plan.

Background

14. In 2019 City of York Council declared a climate emergency and created an ambition to reach Net Zero carbon by 2030. In December 2022, 'The York Climate Change Strategy: A City Fit for the Future' was published, alongside the Climate Change Action plan, to set out the framework for achieving our ambition.
15. The Action Plan committed to an annual review, with work beginning in February 2024, 14 months after the original Action Plan was published.
16. The original Action Plan included 160 potential actions, based on the previous work done by Leeds University (Net Zero Roadmap for York), pathway modelling by Anthesis, best practice guidance from the Local Government Association, recommended actions for Local Authorities by Friends of the Earth, stakeholder workshops and officer engagement.
17. As part of the annual review, updates against each action were gathered from internal and external stakeholders, with additional feedback requested on the structure of the Action Plan.

18. A summary of updates to the Action Plan following the review process is provided below:
 - 28 individual actions have been completed. These are recorded in a separate section of the plan with evidence to this work.
 - 85 actions have been consolidated. Explanations for consolidation include: significant overlap or duplication with other actions, multiple actions being replaced with a single over-arching action, actions from other Council or city action plans being removed to simplify reporting, no current Council of city resources being available to support action delivery.
 - 35 actions have been added.
 - An update for 2024 against all live actions.
 - A new categorisation of actions as either mitigation and/or adaptation
 - Assigned action owner for all actions.
 - Identified input/support requirements for all actions, where appropriate.
 - Constraints were removed as they were deemed to be adding limited value.

19. As with the previous Action Plan, a high-level estimate of the potential impact from each action is provided, along with an estimate for timescales, cost and co-benefits.

20. During the review process, further improvements have been identified but were not possible to include in this iteration. As the Action Plan is a live document, additional features for consideration in future versions include:
 - An indication of progress, as a percentage, for projects that are underway but not yet completed.
 - A mechanism for prioritising projects, such as a Marginal Abatement Cost Curve

21. The time and resource requests associated with updating the Climate Action Plan have been greater than expected. The level of internal and external engagement has provided valuable insight and provided significant benefit to the process; however, this approach is unsustainable for an annual review. Consideration has therefore been given to reducing the level of engagement for future annual reviews or extending the time-period between reviews of the Action Plan to every two years.

Consultation Analysis

22. Consultation on the Climate Action Plan refresh has been carried out with internal Council service areas. This has been facilitated by the Carbon Reduction team through Heads of Service. Feedback received has been incorporated into the presented Action Plan refresh.
23. The York Climate Commission (YCC) Working Groups have been consulted on the Action Plan refresh. This consultation was facilitated by the Carbon Reduction team and YCC Steering Group. The Action Plan refresh was an agenda item at the YCC Steering Group meeting in May 2024 and September 2024.
24. The Sustainability Leaders Group, representing partner organisations across the city, have been consulted on the content of the Action Plan refresh. The Action Plan was presented to the group at the meeting in July 2024.
25. An analysis has been carried out to compare the York Climate Change Action Plan with the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission (YHCC) Action Plan. This analysis has identified significant synergies between the action plans and some areas that can be strengthened in the next refresh.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

26. Options for this decision include:

Option 1 – Do Not Approve the Climate Change Action Plan

Do not approve the updated Climate Change Action Plan and continue with the one adopted in 2022. The 2022 Action Plan does not show the progress made since adoption and many of the actions have now been completed, superseded or consolidated, making it difficult to navigate. It also fails to provide an accurate representation of the latest requirements and activity in the city and omits the emphasis on making York climate ready, following the Executive Member Decision in November 2023.

Option 2 – Approve the Climate Change Action Plan and continue with and annual update

Approve the updated Climate Change Action Plan. The updated action plan is more in-line with current Council actions and those that can be achieved in the next few years. Updates to the Action Plan make it easier to navigate and more informed. The updated Action Plan covers both mitigation and adaptation actions, providing a more comprehensive reflection of activity to support our climate change objectives.

The resource and capacity requirements to refresh the Action Plan are not sustainable for future annual updates. The refresh process began has taken 6 months owing the detailed input and consultation with internal and external stakeholders. This impacts the team's ability to deliver against the action plan and is not seen as a sustainable or cost-effective use of these resources. If annual updates were to continue, the level of consultation and detail would need to be reduced, and new information and developments into the plan would be scaled-back.

Option 3 – Approve the Climate Change Action Plan and revert to a biennial update

Approval of the refreshed Action Plan is as above but revert to provide future updates every 2 years. This reduces the resource requirements on the team and will allow for a more detailed revision, with full consultation and continuous improvement of the Action Plan. Progress against individual actions within the plan can still be provided on an annual basis.

Organisational Impact and Implications

- **Financial:** The action plan itself can be reviewed and updated within current resources. The action plan identifies a large number of projects that are agreed through their own financial approvals.
- **Human Resources (HR):** There are no HR implications contained within this report. However, should additional resources be required by the Council to deliver the actions these would be established and resourced in accordance with normal council policy.
- **Legal:** There are no legal implications linked to the recommendations specifically referred to within this report.

- **Procurement:** Whilst there are no direct procurement implications relating to the report itself, should any funding require external delivery, this must be procured via a compliant, process in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (soon to be Procurement Act 2023).
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Public Health support the recommendations in this report, by refreshing the actions in the plan that address climate impacts before they escalate, can save significant healthcare costs by reducing the prevalence of climate-related diseases.

Fewer people experiencing preventable illnesses due to pollution, extreme heat, or climate disasters can alleviate the financial burden on healthcare systems and communities, freeing resources for other essential health services.

Through comprehensive climate action, societies can simultaneously improve public health and build more sustainable and resilient communities.

- **Environment and Climate action:** The refreshed Climate Change Action Plan supports the delivery of the York Climate Change Strategy. The Carbon Reduction Team will monitor progress of the action plan and undertake updates. A change to biennial updates will free-up capacity within the team to focus on delivery.
- **Affordability:** A number of the actions in this report improve the efficiency of homes and also skills development, both of which support financial security in the future.
- **Equalities and Human Rights:** The actions listed in the action plan are delivered through different programmes. These programmes/projects will develop their own Equalities Impact Assessments to assess and minimise any potential negative impacts.
- **Data Protection and Privacy:** As there is no personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data being processed, there is no requirement to complete a data protection impact assessment (DPIA). This is evidenced by completion of DPIA screening questions AD-10350.

- **Communications:** The actions listed in the action plan are delivered through different programmes. These programmes/projects will develop their own communications where necessary.
- **Economy:** There are no economic implications contained within this report.

Risks and Mitigations

27. Capacity constraints
The Carbon Reduction team has limited resources to undertake a full refresh of the Action Plan every year. It also puts a capacity requirement on other service areas to input and consult on the refresh.
28. Finance
Some actions within the plan are currently unfunded. The Council will seek to secure external funding wherever possible.
29. Pace and scale
The actions represent the extent of activity currently happening across the city. The ambition for York to be net zero and climate ready by 2030 will require a significant acceleration of the pace and expansion of the scale of essential actions to support decarbonisation and adaptation.

Wards Impacted

30. All

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

Author

Name:	Shaun Gibbon
Job Title:	Head of Carbon reduction
Service Area:	Carbon Reduction
Telephone:	07923 222971

Report approved:	Yes
Date:	25/10/2024

Background papers

York Climate Change Strategy
York Climate Change Action Plan 2022

Annexes

- Annex A – York Climate Change Action Plan 2024