

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b> 13 October 2021
<b>Subject:</b>	Climate Action Strategy and Action Plan	
<b>Report of</b>	Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations	

## Summary

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and in response drafted a Climate Action Strategy and Climate Action Plan which shows how Bury Council plans to reach carbon-neutrality by 2038.

The Strategy was subject to stakeholder and public consultation for ten weeks from 3 June 2021 to the 12 August 2021 and the draft Strategy and Action Plan have now been updated to reflect the consultation.

The report outlines the proposed arrangements to oversee the implementation and governance of the Strategy and Action Plan. This includes a proposal for a Climate Action Board to be created to oversee the delivery of the Strategy and the creation of Local Climate Action Forums in each of the five neighbourhoods to encourage community engagement.

A sum of £100k has been committed to a Climate Action Fund to enable community groups to carry out projects that aid the Council to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038.

## Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

1. Note the findings of the public consultation and the post consultation revisions, comments, and updates.
2. Adopt the updated Climate Action Strategy with a target of achieving carbon-neutrality by 2038.
3. Adopt the Climate Action Plan, which will be reviewed annually.
4. Approve the proposed arrangement for implementation and governance as set out in this report and delegate authority to the Director of Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Climate Change and Operations and Monitoring Officer to agree amendments to the governance arrangements if needed to ensure effective delivery.
5. Approve the method outlined for distributing the Community Climate Action Fund and delegate authority to the Director of Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Climate Change and Operations to agree amendments to the arrangements if needed to ensure effective delivery.

## **Reasons for recommendation(s)**

We have declared a Climate Emergency and have committed to achieving carbon neutrality in the Let's do it strategy by 2038.

## **Alternative options considered and rejected**

The Council could attempt to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038 without a Strategy or Action Plan. This option has been considered and rejected as the Council and its partners would be unclear on their priorities and how to deliver them.

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## **Background**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This report sets out the methods used to consult on the draft Climate Action Strategy and Action Plan. It provides a summary of the findings, post consultation revisions, comments, and updates, together with an overview of the intended next steps and proposed governance arrangements to oversee delivery.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1. In 2019, Bury Council declared a Climate Emergency in response to undeniable evidence that human activities were having a detrimental effect on our planet. Members will recall that the original date for achieving carbon neutrality was 2030, however it was recognised this would not be achievable and the Council therefore refined its commitment, to align with other Greater Manchester districts and achieve carbon neutrality by 2038. This was set out in the Let's Do It Strategy, which was endorsed Cabinet at its meeting in February 2021, and then approved by Full Council in March 2021.
- 2.2. In 2021, a draft Climate Action Strategy was produced to demonstrate the pathway required to reach carbon-neutrality by 2038. An adjoining Climate Action Plan was produced to accompany the Strategy and directly outline actions that we need to carry out to achieve our 2038 target.
- 2.3. The Climate Action Strategy contributes towards meeting the Council's priorities across a range of policy areas including housing, energy, transport, food, waste, and the natural environment. It sets out the scale of the environmental crisis affecting Bury and the challenges facing the Borough and provides a clear direction of travel for the delivery of a robust response to the emergency. The Strategy demonstrates that there are many potential opportunities available to Bury such as improving transport networks, promoting local and healthy food, and increasing the efficiency of our homes to name just a few.

- 2.4. The Strategy has been informed by Anthesis's SCATTER tool as well as several of the Council's Strategy documents including the Let's Do It and Housing Strategy.
- 2.5. The Draft Strategy was approved by Cabinet for public consultation on the 26 May 2021.

### **3. Consultation**

- 3.1. The consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Gunning Principles. It ran for ten weeks commencing 3 June 2021 to the 12 August 2021. The consultation was open to anyone who lived, worked, studied, or spent leisure time in Bury.
- 3.2. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we were limited in the number of traditional face-to-face engagements we could host. Consequently, several different approaches were introduced to raise the profile of the consultation and maximise engagement.
- 3.3. The consultation initially involved one online questionnaire, however, a second was introduced during a midpoint review, which included a simplified set of questions and was shortened in length and time required to complete.
- 3.4. To gather insightful data and provide information on the Strategy, we hosted an online webinar for residents and stakeholders; three focus group sessions with Climate Action Bury, Prestwich Environmental Forum and Keep Bury Clean; and two drop-in sessions at Radcliffe Library and Bury Market.
- 3.5. The Strategy was promoted via both internal and external key partner/stakeholder networks, targeted social media campaigns, the Council Website, press releases, and One Community Bury. Railing banners/Correx boards advertising climate action were displayed at twelve of Bury's parks and roller banners were placed in several Council-owned buildings. A dedicated Climate Action Strategy consultation page was established on the Council's Website which included the draft Strategy and Action Plan as well as an accessible version of the document.
- 3.6. Feedback was encouraged by post or e-mail and paper copies of the consultation could be requested via email or the customer contact centre.

### **4. Consultation Responses/Key Themes**

- 4.1. A robust number of useful comments were accrued from the consultation process, despite the consultation taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - 1.5k people visited the consultation webpage
  - 426 online surveys were completed generating around 562 comments and suggestions.
    - Detailed questionnaire: 264
    - Short questionnaire: 162
  - 9 paper surveys were completed
  - 3 Focus Groups were held with prominent local environmental groups.
  - 2 drop-in sessions were held, at Radcliffe Library and Bury Market.
  - 1 Public Webinar was held.

- 4.2. Most respondents lived and/or worked in the borough. In terms of geographical spread, most respondents came from Bury (38%) followed by Radcliffe (18%), Prestwich (14%), Whitefield (11%), Tottington (10%), and Ramsbottom (8%). Approximately 42% of all respondents were aged 55 or over, while 85% were aged 35 or over. 65% were female, 53% indicated that they had no religion and, 92% stated their ethnicity as white British.
- 4.3. The consultation initially started off as a single detailed questionnaire, however, during a midway review it was decided to add a second shorter questionnaire to increase the response rate. The initial detailed questionnaire followed the following structure:
- Personal Responsibility
  - Importance of Key Action Areas
  - Funding
  - Environmental Forums
  - Demographics

The questionnaire allowed respondents to specifically rank which actions included in the Climate Action Plan they considered to be most important and provided space for any additional considerations for the Council finalising the Strategy and Action Plan.

The shortened questionnaire asked similar questions to the detailed questionnaire but in a more concise manner, the structure was as follows:

- About You
- Climate Action Priorities
- Local Action
- Demographics

The questionnaire asked respondents which Key Action Areas they considered most important and again provided space for any additional considerations that the Council should consider when finalising the Strategy and Action Plan.

- 4.4. Included in Appendix 1 is the Climate Change Strategy Consultation Feedback Report, which goes into greater detail about the results of the consultation.

In short, there was a lot of interest in:

- Construction on greenbelt
- Plastic recycling
- Improving cycling infrastructure
- Helping homeowners/landlord to retrofit their properties.

For more detail see the full report at Appendix 1.

- 4.5. Specifically, to answer the 4 topics of most interest:

- 4.6. Construction on Greenbelt –

Bury have signed up to the Greater Manchester 'Places for Everyone' (PfE), which is a statutory development plan for sustainable growth for nine boroughs of Greater Manchester. In particular it:

- sets out how these boroughs should develop up to the year 2037;
- identifies the amount of new development that will come forward in terms of housing, offices, and industry and warehousing, and the main areas in which this will be focused;
- identifies the important environmental assets which will be protected and enhanced;
- allocates sites for employment and housing required outside of the urban area;
- supports the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities; and
- defines a new Green Belt boundary for the nine boroughs.

Government policy specifies that development plans, should provide for assessed housing needs. A standard national methodology for identifying Local Housing Needs (LNH) is in place. This tool helps Bury to know how many new homes it needs in the future. The LNH gives Bury a target of **9,456** homes over the period of the plan.

However, as we are signed up to PfE, which is a joint plan we can share the housing target across other boroughs in Greater Manchester, which reduces our housing target to **7,228** homes, a reduction of 2,168.

As a Borough, we simply do not have enough land within the urban area or on brownfield sites to meet either our full Local Housing Need target of 9,456 homes or even the reduced PfE target of 7,228 homes over the plan period.

Our existing housing land supply evidence identifies there is only enough land to accommodate 3,776 homes, just over half of the demand. This covers brownfield sites within in Bury including potential developments sites within our town centres and other brownfield sites such as the former East Lancashire Paper Mill and former Tetrosyl site at Bevis Green in Walmersley. Therefore, unfortunately we must consider using green belt land for the extra homes that are required.

We are aware that this is an important issue and therefore need to ensure that any new development is in line with goals of the council in achieving carbon neutrality by 2038. As part of PfE, each of the proposed development sites includes a detailed policy that will have to be complied with before planning permission will be granted. This will include a range of criteria to mitigate the potential environmental damage such as:

- Requirements for new transport infrastructure (i.e. tram stops, bus routes, cycling and walking facilities)
- Incorporation of Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Biodiversity net gain

- Incorporation of natural infrastructure
- Flood defence and mitigation.

#### 4.7. Plastic Recycling –

Plastic recycling forms part of our wider focus on Consumption and Waste. We are waiting for the outcome of the National Waste and Resources Strategy, which should help to address plastic recycling. In the meantime, we have a commitment to look at how we can avoid single use plastic and we continue to attempt to improve the recycling rates we achieve at the kerbside.

#### 4.8. Improving Cycling Infrastructure –

We are excited that there were many comments about cycling infrastructure as we believe the ambitious plans at the Greater Manchester level for the Bee Network, will significantly improve cycling infrastructure over the next few years in Bury. We are supporting this programme as much as possible and are currently in the process of hiring a cycling and walking officer to help develop our infrastructure.

#### 4.9. Helping homeowners/landlord to retrofit their properties –

The Council recognises that this is a significant challenge over the next 17 years as the scale of the properties that need retrofitting can be overwhelming. We are aware of this and are working with six town housing to look at retrofitting social housing using the PAS 2035 standard as exemplars for the wider community. There is funding available for this, and we are currently working on a bid. This funding is also available to private landlords, and we will be looking at how we can support them to take advantage of it.

As for privately owned properties we appreciate this is an area that needs more attention and are looking at ways we can use the social housing retrofit to help us learn and help to build capacity locally in Bury to ensure there is the skills and capacity to start addressing this in a wider context.

#### 4.10. Appendix 1 highlights the areas of the strategy that were most important to people based on the consultation response. This data is then split down by township to show what is important to people in the differing townships. This information will be used to drive forward the delivery of the Action Plan and will allow priority to be given to the areas work important to the people of Bury.

### 5. **Revisions to the Strategy and Action Plan**

#### 5.1. Following analysis and full consideration of the responses received from the consultation; a number of revisions/updates have been made to the draft Strategy and Action Plan. Section 8 of Appendix 1 details the revisions made to both the Climate Strategy and Action Plan. A copy of the updated Strategy and Action Plan can be found in Appendices 2 and 3.

## **6. Delivery of the Strategy**

- 6.1. The Climate Action Plan has been developed to support the delivery of the Strategy. The Action Plan has nine strategic priorities which were refined down from the pre-consultation eleven.
- 6.2. "Carbon Offsetting" was merged into Resilience and Adaptation as there were very few comments around this area and it was considered the least important measure by respondents of the consultation and not a short-term priority.
- 6.3. "Putting Climate Change at the Heart of the Council" has now been merged into all the other action areas as it was shown by the respondents to be a key element of the overall action plan.
- 6.4. The new 9 action areas are as follows:
  - Energy
  - Homes, Workplaces & Public Buildings
  - Low-Carbon Travel
  - Consumption & Waste
  - Food
  - Natural Environment
  - Green Economy
  - Environmental Justice
  - Resilience & Adaption
- 6.5. The Strategy outlines the approach the Council will take to achieve its objectives and focus resources, in collaboration with partners.
- 6.6. The Action Plan will be a fluid document that will be used to monitor progress and it will be reviewed every 12 months.

## **7. Governance**

- 7.1. Officers with clear roles and responsibilities will oversee the delivery of the Strategy and supporting Action Plan. There is now a Climate Action Team in place with the Environmental Unit Manager managing two Climate Action Officers.
- 7.2. It is proposed that progress will be monitored against the Climate Action Plan by a newly created Climate Action Board, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Climate Change and Operations; and include representation from the Climate Action Team, political parties in Bury, a representative from each of the Climate Action Forums, Bury Means Business, Six Town Housing, the NHS and Bury Voluntary Community and Faith Alliance (VCFA). The Board will meet quarterly in line with the Climate Action Forums and set the priorities from the Climate Action Plan and assess ongoing progress.
- 7.3. The proposed Terms of Reference for the board can be found in Appendix 8.

## **8. Climate Action Forums**

- 8.1. It is proposed to establish 5 Neighbourhood Climate Action Forums in line with the Council's new Neighbourhood Model to foster community involvement and engagement with this agenda. The original proposal was to name the groups Environmental Forums however it was felt the name Climate Action Forums better represented the focus of the forums.
- 8.2. The responses to the consultation highlighted that communities wanted to have a larger voice and input into this agenda and the Forums create a platform to enable this.
- 8.3. We understand there are existing groups already doing great work to support the Climate Change Agenda. The Climate Action Forums are not designed to supersede them, but to work alongside them to progress climate action in the community.
- 8.4. The Climate Action Forums will operate on a quarterly basis and will be chaired and deputy-chaired by elected representatives from two different political parties.
- 8.5. There will be an opportunity for communication to take place between the Council and residents about what actions or initiatives are taking place. It will also be an opportunity for education and networking. The aim is to help the community take a more active role in helping Bury achieve carbon neutrality by 2038.
- 8.6. We are aiming to use the excitement and engagement around COP 26 to aid us to establish the Forums and therefore plan to hold the first forums in November/December.
- 8.7. The proposed Terms of Reference for the Climate Action Forums can be found in Appendix 7.

## **9. Community Climate Action Fund**

- 9.1. To encourage community engagement with this agenda, £100,000 was assigned from the Climate Manifesto Budget for a Community Climate Action Fund. This fund is for community groups to carry out projects or activities that help Bury move toward carbon-neutrality by 2038.
- 9.2. This money will be distributed by March 2022 and must be spent by end December 2022.
- 9.3. An application form has been crafted which includes information regarding the fund as well as the wider Strategy to help applicants bid for funding. This application form can be found in appendix 5.
- 9.4. Applications for funding will open 1 November 2021 and remain open until 30 November 2021.
- 9.5. An initial sifting will occur within the Climate Action Team and then pass onto a member led panel chaired by the portfolio holder for the Environment, Climate Change and Operations for final decision.



## 10. Next Steps

- 10.1. The Council will execute the Strategy as a matter of priority, subject to approval. The Climate Action Plan will guide implementation of a range of projects aligned to each of the priorities. Progress will be reported/monitored in accordance with paragraph 7.2 of this report.

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### Links with the Corporate Priorities:

As part of 'Section 4 – Vision for the Borough in 2030' in the Let's Do It Strategy. There is a commitment to Carbon Neutrality by 2038. The items outlined in this report are the realisation of this aim being put into practice.

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### Equality Impact and Considerations:

Please see EQIA attached in Appendix 6.

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### Environmental Impact and Considerations:

The items outlined in this report demonstrate how the Council is going to achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2038. Therefore, this will have a significantly positive impact on the Council's carbon emissions and environmental impact.

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### Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The Climate Action Forums receive low numbers of people attending, which damages our reputation and hinders delivery.	Working closely with the Community Hubs and the Neighbourhood Forums to ensure the message is spread widely.  Producing a communications plan that uses the momentum of Greater Manchester's Green Summit and COP26 to encourage enthusiasm in this agenda and directing residents to take part in the forums.
A low number of applications are received for the Community Climate Action Fund, which prevents us from giving out all the available fund and driving progress.	Engage with appropriate community groups and charities as early as possible and as part of a communication plan.

There are further details provided regarding risk in Chapter 7 of the Climate Action Strategy (Appendix 2)

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### **Legal Implications:**

Good consultation is governed by the principles arising from R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning (known as the Gunning principles). The case set out that for a consultation to be legitimate four principles should be met. The principles were that consultation should take place at a time when the proposals are at a formative stage. There must be sufficient information to allow the consultees to be able to provide an informed response. All consultation should ensure there is adequate time for consideration and response by consultees. It is important that conscientious consideration must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made.

A public consultation has taken place over a ten week period from 3rd June to 12th August 2021. This consultation has used a variety of methods to consult with members of the public this has included online surveys, focus groups and drop in sessions. The report sets out how amendments were made to the methods of consultation during the consultation period to encourage participation. Paragraph 5 sets out the analysis of the consultation responses and revisions made to the draft strategy and action plan.

It is proposed that if approved the plan is monitored by a newly established Climate Action Board and the Climate action forums. The proposed terms of reference of the Climate Action Board are appended to this report and it will be reviewed as out in recommendation 4.

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### **Financial Implications:**

£100k has been set aside from the Climate Manifesto Budget for a Community Climate Action Fund. This fund is for community groups to carry out projects or activities that help Bury move toward carbon-neutrality by 2038.

Implementing the wider strategy will also have costs that will need to be funded. The extent and timing of these cannot yet be quantified and it is anticipated that funding from central government will be made available. All implementation plans will be subject to robust business cases and the identification of funding and financing options.

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### **Background papers:**

Appendix 1: Climate Change Strategy Consultation Feedback Report

Appendix 2: Climate Action Strategy

Appendix 3: Climate Action Plan

Appendix 4: Cabinet Report date 26 May 2021 – Public Consultation on the Draft Climate Strategy and Draft Climate Action Plan

Appendix 5: Climate Action Fund Application Form

Appendix 6: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 7: Climate Action Forum Terms of Reference

Appendix 8: Climate Action Board Terms of Reference

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Anthesis's SCATTER tool	Web based tool for Local Authorities to assess and report on greenhouse gas emissions.
Gunning Principles	The founding legal principles that must be applied to public consultation in the UK.
PfE	Places for Everyone – long term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts for jobs, new homes and sustainable growth. Published by Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
PAS 2035	Over-arching document in the retrofit standards framework. It provides a specification for the energy retrofit of domestic buildings, and details best practice guidance for domestic retrofit projects.
COP 26	The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference.