



Subject:	Council Climate Plan Programme Update
Date:	15 th June 2023
Reporting Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner
Contact Officers:	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide members an overview of the current Climate Programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: I. Note the contents of the report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Council climate activities (i) Climate Risk Assessment The final report (due in June 2023) will specifically highlight risks to Council assets and operations from surface water flooding, coastal flooding, and extreme heat. (ii) Climate Action Plan

A final report (due in June 2023) will highlight climate actions under five themes – Tools for the Transition; Energy and Buildings; Transport; Waste Management; Adaptation.

(iii) Climate Investment Framework

The aim is to develop a costed long term investment plan so that investments can be sequenced in a logical order and to enable accurate and effective financial planning and also to identify funding opportunities and develop a delivery plan to secure funding. This report will be informed by the Climate Risk Assessment and the Climate Action Plan.

(iv) Energy Audits

The Energy Change Working Group is commissioning Energy Audits of four Council buildings with high energy consumption: City Hall, Cecil Ward, Adelaide and Duncrue. The audits will provide a detailed understanding of current energy use on these sites and a clear understanding of how best to identify areas of energy, CO2e and cost savings. The work is expected to commence in early August 2023.

(v) Climate Fund

£646,500 of the internal Climate Fund has been allocated across eighteen projects:

1. Pilot to Improve Recycling Rates (within street litter bins in the city centre)
2. Carbon and Biodiversity Assessment of Cave Hill Country Park
3. Survey of Wildflower Meadows / Species Rich Grassland (on four sites)
4. Feasibility Study of Beechvale
5. HVO Fuel Trial
6. Furniture Re-cycling/Upcycling pilot
7. Age Friendly Refurbishment of Laptops via HRCs
8. Single Use Plastics Policy
9. Period Waste Project
10. Additional Metering to Waterfront Hall
11. Installation of Solar Film to Waterfront Hall
12. Calculating Council's Supply Chain emissions
13. Active Travel Analysis
14. Adoption of HVO within BCC Fleet
15. Water Refill Stations (at two sites TBC)
16. Paint Re-Use pilot
17. Access Control (at 3 Council sites – City Hall, Cecil Ward, and Adelaide)
18. Energy Audits of four sites (City Hall, Cecil Ward, Adelaide and Duncrue)

(vi) Sustainable Procurement

The Climate and Procurement teams are working to integrate sustainability into Council's procurement processes and decisions. A Supply Chain Analysis is being commissioned to better understand Council's supply chain emissions with a final report due in July.

(vii) Active Travel

The Active Travel Working Group will pilot a staff engagement tool with Sustainabl.co using a staff survey to: 1) understand how staff currently travel to and from work; 2) identify barriers to active travel; 3) identify incentives to encourage active travel; and 4) gather suggestions from staff. The survey will be advertised via Interlink and in the June issue of the staff newsletter. It is anticipated the survey will be live for 6 weeks from w/c 5 June 2023.

3.2 City-wide climate activities

(i) One million Trees

The team is working with delivery partners to plan planting and engagement activity for the new planting season with Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP) leading on rural/farm development and bringing on board TCv, to support BHP in the urban/city engagements. A school

engagement plan is being finalised. Sites for mass planting include, Ballygomartin, Cavehill, Dunmurry Golf Course, Lagan Lands East and other sites are being assessed. Conversations are also ongoing with sports bodies, to utilise grounds and improve climate engagement/education. A number of urban nurseries are also being explored across the city.

(ii) UPSURGE

Work continues at Botanic Gardens to sample contaminated soil, undertake base line ecological surveys and stakeholder and co-design engagements for the community garden on the site. The team is currently seeking stakeholder feedback on Phase 2 designs and a final layout prior to construction in the coming weeks.

(iii) Belfast Local Area Energy Plan and Queens Island Decarbonisation Plan

This work is being delivered by the Energy Systems Catapult and involves working with key city stakeholders to model the City's energy system and identify the most cost effective pathways to decarbonise. Work to date has focused on: 1) identifying and engaging key stakeholders; and 2) understanding and representing the current local energy system; and agreeing scenarios to run through the model. The next stage will model options for the future, identify priorities and create the plan. Ultimately, the LAEP will provide the data to shape net zero investments across the city.

(iv) Net Zero Belfast

UKRI Phase 1 funding of £59,915 was secured under the Net Zero Living: Pioneer Places competition to develop a plan to support the commercialisation of green technologies in the Innovation District. The project is being delivered by the Energy Systems Catapult in partnership with Catagen, Artemis Technologies and ICB with a feasibility study report due in June. This report will underpin an application for Phase 2 funding (£100K-£5m).

(v) Solar PV rooftop assessment

A solar rooftop assessment is underway as part of the work with Cork City Council funded by the Shared Island Development Fund. An update will be brought to members in due course.

(vi) Solar PV Park in Giants Park

Discussions are ongoing between Council (Physical Programmes and the Climate Team) and NI water. NI Water are seeking a partnership with BCC to develop a 4MW solar park project on Giants Park. The proposed solar park would provide a direct wire to NI Water's largest wastewater treatment works at Duncrue. The project would also deliver Translink with green hydrogen supporting a decarbonised public transport system for Belfast and NI. There is also an option to provide power and hydrogen to BCC's Duncrue site which would enable more of the fleet to either be electrified or powered by hydrogen. NI Water envisage an emerging partnership - a Belfast Hydrogen Hub with NIW, Translink and BCC at its core and the Port of Belfast as a key green energy hub (with RCV/ HGV fuelling; harbour transport decarbonisation; Artemis; Catagen etc.). The project would require approx. 20 acres on the Giant's Park landfill site. This would need further consideration in the context of pre-existing commitments and proposals for the site.

(vii) Heat network for the City Centre

A market engagement exercise has been completed and the team has engaged with the UK Infrastructure Bank and the Meridiam Fund to better understand the commercial considerations. A key consideration is securing anchor loads (off-takers) to make the scheme commercially viable (and hence investible); securing land for the energy centre and securing grant finance (as heat networks tend to be borderline investible). The next steps are to secure letters of interest from those who have initially expressed interest in the scheme; to revise the draft specification for the feasibility study; and to engage with regional and national government on sources of grant finance to support the development of a scheme.

(viii) UP2030 - Net Zero neighbourhood

Funded by Horizon Europe, Belfast is a pilot city with a focus on an area that includes LQ BID district, Sandy Row, Market, Donegall Pass, and Barrack Street. The climate team is working with colleagues in City Development to support the co-design of a neighbourhood plan with the aim to embed net zero in urban planning and begin the conversation in local neighbourhoods. This will ultimately produce a toolkit/framework that can be replicated in other neighbourhoods across the city.

(ix) Retrofit Delivery Hub

The Belfast Retrofit Hub was convened by BCC in September 2022 to catalyse retrofit activity on public and private buildings across the city. The hub brings together NIHE, the construction industry and other key stakeholders. So far there has been 4 hub meetings and 9 roundtable discussions facilitated by Professor Alice Owen from Leeds University. A programme of work is under development. The Climate team has also worked through Solace to seek an update from Head of NI Civil Service on NI's access to ECO plus funding that has been made available by Treasury for energy efficiency measures. NI is currently the only part of the UK that has not put in place a scheme to access this funding.

(x) Belfast Electric Vehicle Strategy

The Strategy is being developed by Urban Foresight and will provide a framework and targets, as well as a set of recommendations to support the transition to EV (mindful of city ambitions around active travel and modal shift). The Climate team is engaging with DFI to ensure alignment with the regional EV plan and the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. A draft strategy is under review. The team is also progressing funding bids for the council estate through ORCS and the FASTER project (see separate paper). Negotiations are also ongoing with ESB on existing EV infrastructure (ESB) via the internal EVI Working Group.

(xi) Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership

The Partnership has been re-established with the first SFP Steering group held in March and a wider partnership meetings scheduled this month. A Belfast SFP Framework and Action Plan has also been completed to support the renewal of Bronze Sustainable Food Place award and potential progression to Silver and Gold.

(xii) Net Zero Park Concept

The Climate team is working with the Innovation Director on the development of the Net Zero Park Concept via the Innovation City Belfast partnership. As well as providing affordable green energy (from private networks) and the ability for companies to plug into low carbon infrastructure, the Park will support the retention and expansion of existing manufacturers and attract newcomers to the City.

3.3 Monitoring and reporting activities

(i) Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)

CDP is a not-for-profit charity which operates a global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states, and regions to manage their environmental impacts. In 2022, Belfast achieved an A rating and is ranked as a Leadership city demonstrating best practice standards across adaptation and mitigation, has set ambitious but realistic goals and made progress towards achieving those goals. Cities in the Leadership band have strategic, holistic plans in place to ensure the actions they are taking will reduce climate impacts and vulnerabilities of the citizens, businesses and organizations residing in their city. The Council's 2023 CDP submission is currently being prepared for submission by 25 June 2023. The scores will be announced in November 2023.

(ii) Climate Emergency UK (CEUK)

CEUK provides information on UK Council's climate plans and action through 'Council Scorecards.' The Climate Team is currently engaging with CEUK and completed the 'Right to Reply' submission in May 2023. The results will be announced in Autumn 2023.

	<p>(iii) NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey</p> <p>The NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey is managed by Business in the Community and enables NI organisations to benchmark against sector peers based on environmental management and performance in key areas, as well as the extent to which environmental business practices have been embedded within corporate strategies. Council historically engaged with this benchmarking exercise. It is proposed Council re-engage with this exercise and make a submission in 2023. The submission is due by 28 June 2023 with scores being released on 15 November 2023. Participating organisations will score either Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or Green.</p> <p>Further updates will be brought to Committee.</p>
3.4	<p>External funding applications</p> <p>(i) Innovate UK Net Zero Living Digital Accelerator Fund</p> <p>Members to note that a letter of support has been provided to Sustainabl.co in relation to a Innovate UK funding bid which was submitted on 7 June 2023. The Net Zero Living Digital Accelerator (round 1) fund provides grants between £150,000 and £300,000 to UK registered businesses to develop digital applications to solve challenges in delivering net zero. The project will use software to create a platform for the collection and analysis of data which will be used to identify projects and behaviour change among Council staff specifically on their power use, heat and travel both in the workplace and homes. Successful applicants will be notified on 30 June 2023. Projects must be delivered between November 2023 and October 2024.</p> <p>(ii) Horizon Europe Greenports</p> <p>Belfast is one of 22 partners (including QUB) on this application for a 3 year project focused on the use of nature based solutions in port cities with a geographical focus on the city centre waterfront zone. Potential interventions include greenways development, multiple gateways that connect the neighbourhood and the city, a series of iconic beacons, wayfinding markers and pause points and will showcase the unique character of the port and the city while offering citizens and visitors a safe, cohesive, and inspiring outdoor experience. The proposed project aligns with the work of the Waterfront Task Group and the proposal was developed in consultation Kerrie Sweeney, Maritime Mile. If successful, the budget for Belfast would be Euros 720,000 with a funding decision due in September.</p>
4.0	Financial & Resource Implications
4.1	The KPMG consultancy work was costed and paid for via the existing Climate Unit 22/23 budget. The Energy Audits and Active Travel work is funded via the internal Climate Fund. There is no cost associated with reporting through the Carbon Disclosure Project, Climate Emergency UK, or BiTC Environmental Benchmarking. Any costs relating to the Sustainable Procurement workstream are TBC.
4.1	The activities relating to the Climate Fund are funded through existing departmental budgets.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications
	There are no direct equality and good relations implications.
5.1	None.
6.0	Appendices
6.1	None.