

Climate Action Plan

2021

Addressing the Climate Crisis for Copeland's People and Places

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Introduction

Copeland Borough Council (“the Council”) recognises that climate change represents a human-made threat and is already having far-reaching, irreversible effects on populations, places, economies, society and the natural environment locally, nationally and globally.

As a responsible authority, we recognise that we must play our part in reducing emissions and harm to the environment and positively contribute to the wellbeing of our planet. While we, as a Council, have done much already, we recognise we have much more to do.

This document outlines our plans to decarbonise our organisation as well as ambitions to support the transition towards a zero-carbon Copeland.

What is a Climate Action Plan?

This Climate Action Plan (“the Plan”) implements the Council’s Climate & Environment Policy (“the Policy”). This is an action-focused document outlining plans to change the way we operate to take greater consideration of sustainability and to immediately reduce our footprint across the organisation.

Why Now?

The Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy commits Cumbria to becoming a carbon neutral county. It is anticipated that this date will be before the 2050 requirement set out under the Climate Change Act of 2008.

We recognise that the way we as individuals, organisations and communities have lived and worked in the past is unsustainable, and that we must change. The changes required are significant, but this is the right thing to do for our people and places, now and for the future.

Carbon Baseline

The Cumbria Carbon Baseline Report shows that Copeland's production and consumption based emissions are relatively low (4.6tCO₂ per capita) and almost equal to the UK average.

Production emissions are the net emissions that take place in Copeland plus those arising from the production of electricity used in the Borough, wherever that generation takes place.

The largest contribution to production based emissions comes from:

- Industrial and commercial fuel use
- Domestic energy use (primarily gas and electricity)
- Road Transport

Consumption based emissions take into account the emissions associated with any goods or services consumed in the Borough, such as food purchased from shops, energy generated elsewhere but used here and vehicle fuel. High areas of consumption based emissions include:

- The emissions footprint of residents is roughly equal to that of visitors
- Top emissions areas for residents include travel (mostly by car), food and drink and household fuel use
- Travel (road and air) dominates visitor emissions

This understanding provides a guide as to where to target emissions reduction interventions.

The Climate Action Plan

Our Plan is transparent and open to challenge – we are on this journey as a society, and we welcome input, support and partnership in taking meaningful steps against climate change.

The plan is divided into the following three areas, each further broken down into themes and actions.

	Description
Sustainable Council Actions	Actions the Council will undertake that affect our operations as an organisation.
Sustainable Borough Actions	Actions that will support our communities to move towards a zero-carbon Cumbria.
Community Leadership & Net Zero Actions	Actions the Council will take to support our aspirations for a zero carbon Cumbria.

We have also set an indication of timeframe against each of the actions identified in the plan (see below). While this is a high-level summary document, more specific timescales will be developed for projects and interventions to implement the actions identified in the following sections.

Timeframe	Description
Short-Term	Actions that can be implemented over this financial year (2021/2022).
Medium-Term	Actions that can be implemented following further planning and development.
Long-Term	Actions that require a number of pre-requisites and government action and/or support before being considered and implemented.
Ongoing	Recurring items that will require regular monitoring and planning.

Immediate Action (2021)

The following action plan sets out detailed actions to be taken by the Council in order to decarbonise our activities and influence the behaviours of those who live in, work in or visit Copeland.

We will pursue this plan, recognising that this is a significant undertaking and that many of the actions, although essential, are reactive rather than preventative.

In order to embed sustainability into corporate and democratic decision-making, the following high priority, high impact actions have been identified:

- Development and adoption of a Sustainability Charter, which publically sets out the Council's commitment to and enforceable expectations of anyone who lives in, works in or visits Copeland, including the Council itself;
- Explicit consideration of sustainability (including climate impact) to be built into corporate governance, reporting and democratic decision-making mechanisms;
- All Council Service Plans (from 2021) to include sustainability targets under our "Aim Higher" performance framework;
- Sustainability to be given proper weighting under Social Value criteria within Council procurement procedures in line with Social Value Act;
- Climate Steering Group to be established to oversee and scrutinise performance against this Climate Action Plan;
- Cultural change programme starting with education and training for leaders, and climate literacy to be embedded into corporate induction;
- Review of corporate policies to embed sustainability, climate and environmental considerations;
- Use Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership funding to create meaningful citizen participation in sustainability and climate action projects, ensuring positive outcomes for all Copeland residents;
- With funding from the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership, host a Copeland Citizen's Jury on Climate Change to inform our plans;
- Explore the formation of a decarbonisation alliance for Copeland/West Cumbria, made up of private, public, third sector and community representatives, to develop a decarbonisation roadmap.

This 10 point plan will be prioritised in 2021, in parallel with the shorter term actions set out in the following sections of this document.

1. Sustainable Council Actions

Objectives	Actions	Timescales
1.1. Members & Employees		
a. To embed a green governance framework into the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Climate Steering Group to oversee delivery of this Plan and other activities. • Appoint an Environmental Champion. • Appoint a Climate Change Champion. • Develop a Climate Charter for the organisation. • Introduce climate-related targets for annual departmental service plans. 	Short Term
b. To ensure decision-making processes consider climatological and environmental impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce “Climate Impact Assessments” to Executive and Full Council decisions. • Embed consideration of sustainability into corporate reporting mechanisms. • Embed “Climate Impact Assessments” into the Council’s project management framework. 	Short Term
c. To ensure our Elected Members and employees are informed of the impacts of climate and environmental change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run climate literacy training sessions for Elected Members and key staff across the organisation. • Incorporate climate-awareness into our induction processes for new Elected Members and Council employees. • Climate literacy training for all existing and new staff. 	Short Term Medium Term
d. To implement more sustainable HR policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of a more flexible agile working policy to remove all unnecessary travel. • To incorporate climate change principles into the Council’s ‘Aim Higher’ process. 	Short-Term
e. To give proper weighting to sustainability in procurement of goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social value to be given minimum 10% weighting in all procurements. 	Short-Term
f. To provide our Officers and Members with adequate technology and software that will support their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage teams to ‘go paperless’ where able to do so (unless required to handle, produce and store physical documents). • Fully utilise technology to support remote working across the organisation. • Eliminate hard-copy agendas for all Council meetings. 	Ongoing
1.2. Property & Estate		
a. To understand the Council’s current emissions and future projections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore methods to undertake a carbon baseline of the Council’s activities. • Introduce an accounting framework to monitor the emissions-reduction of the Council’s properties and estate. 	Medium Term

Objectives	Actions	Timescales
b. To enhance the energy efficiency and minimise energy usage across out estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit of Council property to identify energy efficiency enhancement opportunities. Phased implementation of energy efficiency upgrade programme. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium Term</p>
c. To explore low-carbon energy generation and consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake assessments for the potential development of low-carbon energy generation for our property and estates such as rooftop solar. Move to green tariffs for gas and electricity across our estate. Explore feasibility of renewable energy generation in order to generate revenue, including community ownership schemes. 	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Medium Term</p>
d. To reduce our consumption of water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the feasibility of installing rainwater and/or grey-water recovery systems to property across the estate. 	<p>Medium Term</p>
1.3. Fleet Vehicles & Travel		
a. To significantly reduce travel miles across the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement remote and agile working policy to eliminate all unnecessary travel. Greater use of technology to reduce the need for non-essential travel (e.g. encouraging use of Microsoft Teams and other video-conferencing platforms). Implement a Green Travel Plan for our employees and Elected Members. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium Term</p>
b. To reduce the emissions of our fleet vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a study with the Energy Saving Trust to assess the viability of phasing out the smaller internal-combustion-engines in our fleet and replace them with electric-vehicles. Explore options for electric fleet-cars for our fieldwork Officers to reduce emissions from personal use travel. Consider feasibility of electrified equipment for parks and open spaces machinery. When commercially available, look towards low carbon synthetic fuels (e.g. Hydrogen) powered vehicles for our heavier vehicles such as waste trucks, HGVs and flatbed vehicles. 	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Medium Term</p> <p>Long Term</p>
1.4. Waste & Consumption		
a. Adoption of the waste-hierarchy and circular economy principles across the estate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go paperless, unless there is legal justification to do otherwise. Build these principles into our procurement framework. Ensure every office facility has recycling facilities to reduce direct-to-waste disposal. 	<p>Short Term</p>

Objectives	Actions	Timescales
b. To significantly reduce the usage of single-use plastics across the estate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ban the purchasing of single-use plastic (e.g. food cutlery, cups, plates, stationery).• If purchasing food orders, consider returning/re-using hard-plastic containers for future use.	Short-Term

2. Sustainable Borough Actions

Objectives	Actions	Timescales
2.1. Low Carbon Energy		
a. To be a net-exporter of low carbon energy for the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the generation of low-carbon energy in the Borough, building on the Moorside Clean Energy Park vision to produce low carbon heat, electricity and fuels. 	Ongoing
b. To harness the benefits of Round 4 Offshore Wind developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer and Member engagement with offshore wind developers via Cumbria LEP Clean Energy development team. 	Ongoing
c. To consider potential sites for renewable-power generation for the Council estate – generating our own energy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete study assessing the viability of proposals for solar power generation sites across our property portfolio. Identify suitable sites and develop project plan. Investigate potential opportunities around Community Municipal Bonds to support clean energy generation projects. 	Short-Term
2.2. Decarbonising Heat		
a. To identify opportunities for District Heat Networks to serve Copeland’s rural communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the financial, technical, and logistical viability of district heat networks for settlements in Copeland. 	Long-Term
b. To explore the potential for geothermal energy in Copeland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the financial, technical, and logistical viability of geothermal energy in Copeland. 	Long Term
c. To explore the potential for Advanced Nuclear Technologies to provide industrial and domestic heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with technology vendors and developers to explore opportunities for Advanced Nuclear Technologies in Cumbria to provide low carbon, low cost power, heat, steam and fuels for industry (e.g. Sellafield) and domestic uses. 	Ongoing
2.3. Biodiversity and Land Management		
a. To offset carbon emissions through afforestation initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore available funding and grants for tree-planting schemes to sequester carbon across the Borough. 	Medium-Term
b. To support pollinator health in West Cumbria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support the <i>Keep Cumbria Buzzing</i> initiative to create pollinator corridors across West Cumbria. 	Ongoing
c. To increase sustainable planting practices across the borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue a sustainable planting strategy across our parks and open spaces and town-centres. 	Short Term
d. To manage and reduce the presence of invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To limit the number of invasive species growing in the Borough (such as Japanese Knotweed) which harm the biodiversity of our green spaces. 	Ongoing

Objectives	Actions	Timescales
e. To work with our rural sectors to encourage more sustainable land use, forestry and farming practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via the Cumbria LEP Rural Sector Panel work programme. 	Ongoing
2.4. Built Environment		
a. To increase the energy efficiency of existing building-stock across the Borough and help those experiencing fuel poverty to benefit from such measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost local businesses and residents to government loans and grants related to improving energy efficiency of buildings such as the Green Homes Grant announced in July 2020, CAfS 'Cold to Cosy Homes' scheme and other affordable warmth programmes that help reduce fuel poverty. • Build energy efficiency enhancements into town regeneration projects. 	Short Term
b. To increase the number of sustainable new-build developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support developers to rollout sustainable housing and modular build. • Encourage (e.g. through Local Plan) private developers to consider more sustainable building designs. 	Medium Term
2.5. Resilience & Flooding		
a. To support the delivery of the Cumbria Coastal Strategy by monitoring, mapping and assessing future flood and coastal related impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In line with engagement on the Cumbria Coastal Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assess robustness to future sea-level rise; ○ Protect our coasts and shorelines. 	Ongoing
2.6. Sustainable Transport Solutions		
a. To support the uptake of electric vehicles over the next decade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore funding opportunities for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. • To engage in and support projects to deploy electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the Borough. • Support the development of a Cumbria-wide transport infrastructure plan, including electric vehicle charging networks. 	Medium-Term
b. To enhance cycling infrastructure as part of a wider integrated active travel network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure FHSF funding for cycling improvements in Whitehaven town-centre. • Develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan • Support the development of the Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan 	Ongoing
c. To encourage Hackney Carriage and Private Hire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current policy and explore options to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incentivise uptake of electric vehicles 	Medium Term

Objectives	Actions	Timescales
vehicles to move to electric vehicle fleets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set a cut-off deadline for the new registration of ICE vehicles 	
d. To investigate the opportunities available for hydrogen methods of transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor and maintain awareness on new government policies and announcements related to commercial-scale hydrogen or synthetic e-fuel projects. ● Explore potential for development of a hydrogen network in Copeland/West Cumbria. 	Long-Term
2.7. Waste & Recycling		
a. To provide trade waste recycling services to our businesses to reduce direct-waste disposal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undertake feasibility study/business case. 	Short Term
b. To provide public realm recycling bins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undertake feasibility study/business case. 	Short Term

3. Community Leadership & Net Zero

Objectives	Actions	Timescales
3.1. Lobbying & Influencing		
a. To maintain awareness of changing policy, strategy, legislative and regulatory developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To report any developments to the Climate Steering Group for consideration. Where necessary, respond to relevant consultations and hearings relating to sustainability and climate change. Reflect changing policy landscape in future Climate Action Plans. 	Ongoing
b. To foster collaborative working on net-zero carbon with neighbouring local authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly engage and work with the Local Authority Climate Policy Group and the Cumbria Climate Change Working Group/Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership to support implementation of decarbonisation across the County To work with the Local Enterprise Partnership Clean Energy Sector Panel to develop plans for decarbonisation of Cumbria's energy system Through the Cumbria Climate Change Working Group, advise and support the Cumbria Leaders Board and Cumbria Chief Executive's Group on any matters relating to climate change. 	Ongoing
c. Encourage our local organisations to consider their own environmental impact and future decarbonisation plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with organisations that operate in Copeland to ensure that their carbon reduction and wider sustainability plans meet our expectations. 	Ongoing
3.2. Public Participation & Engagement		
a. To capture local views on climate change into our work and plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a climate change Citizen's Jury in Copeland to give the community a voice in shaping climate policy and plans Explore ways to create a citizen participation approach to climate action in Copeland, aligned to the Zero Carbon Cumbria programme. 	Short Term

Monitoring & Governance

Governance Arrangements

As outlined in the Council's Climate & Environment Policy, a "Climate Steering Group" will be established to provide scrutiny and oversight of the Council's progress, and to oversee the implementation of the Policy and Plan.

The Group will consist of those people across the organisation who can directly influence, contribute to and deliver the actions set out in this document. This Group will:

- ✓ Support and contribute to the development of underlying strategies to the policy;
- ✓ Annually monitor and report progress to appropriate bodies within the Council;
- ✓ Act as "Green Champions" within and outside the organisation and promote a sustainable working culture;
- ✓ Work in collaboration with the Council's Commercial Engagement Group to drive new low-carbon and sustainable ideas that can be funded from additional commercial income or which themselves can generate income or efficiencies.

Terms of Reference for the Group will be detailed and proposed at the first meeting of the Group.

Monitoring

The Climate Action Plan will be adopted by the Council's Executive.

The Climate Action Plan will be reported on annually and an implementation tracker kept up to date as a live document.