

Sefton Climate

Emergency Plan

2022

What Sefton Council

are doing about

Climate Change

Annual Report



Forward from Cllr Lappin

This year saw the release of the latest UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report confirming the sober assessment of our planet's future. It sets out how human activity is changing the climate in unprecedented and sometimes irreversible ways. The landmark study warns of increasingly extreme heatwaves, droughts and flooding, and a key temperature limit being broken in just over a decade. With the UN chief stating that the report "is a code red for humanity".

This was followed by the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) hosted in Glasgow. The conference provided the Council with an opportunity to positively engage with the international agenda and to promote climate change awareness and action across Sefton communities.

This year we have also experienced exceptional weather events, consistent with those we expect to see because of climate change. We had the warmest New Year's Eve and Day on record. We experienced three named storms in one week- Storm Franklin followed closely behind Dudley and Eunice, putting significant pressure on the Council's services.

The huge hikes in energy prices which we have seen in the Council and for residents and businesses across Sefton are shocking. It highlights our vulnerability to global energy markets and reliance on

fossil fuels. Therefore, we need to renew efforts to move away from fossil fuels towards low carbon technologies and renewable energy generated locally.

The financial pressure felt by our residents has also highlighted the invaluable work which the Council's Affordable Warmth Team do in helping residents in crisis and our retrofit programmes which improve insulation in homes to help reduce energy bills for residents as well as reducing harmful emissions into the environment.

As we look ahead to next year, we take strength from the IPCC's view that there is still hope to stabilise rising temperatures, if significant action is taken. As such the Council re-iterate our commitment to taking responsibility for our carbon emissions and playing our part in limiting global average temperature rises. Business as usual is no longer an option.

Cllr Paulette Lappin

Chair of Member Reference Group on Climate Emergency

Executive Summary

The Council's carbon footprint has fallen 13% since 2019/20, which is positive. Emissions are moving in the right direction, towards net zero carbon.

The reduction in emissions during 2021-22 was driven by

- the Council continuing with an agile working policy, with staff working from home unless there is a business need to come to the office
- the completion of the first year of a four-year programme to roll out energy efficient street lighting across the Borough, and
- improvements to the national energy mix (greener electricity coming through the grid).

The foundations have also been laid this year for several key projects which will significantly reduce carbon emissions going forward. For example, this year saw the completion of Bootle and Southport Town Hall Retrofit, which when combined with completion of the remainder of the LED street lighting project, will save the Council 15% of its carbon emissions. And we will see a step change in 2023-24 when we purchase green/renewable electricity, which when combined with the projects above will reduce the Council's footprint by 55%.

Further highlights this year include –

- COP26 (an international climate change conference) hosted in the UK. It ran from 1st November to 12th November 2021 and represented a fantastic opportunity to engage Sefton communities with the climate agenda. We ran a series of events across Sefton to engage the community.

- The introduction of a requirement for all Cabinet and Council decision papers which go to Members need to include a climate change impact assessment. This is helping to ensure that climate change is a visible part of the decision-making process and helping to embed climate change thinking into everything we do across the whole Council.

- Green Sefton launched 'Become a Business Supporter Scheme' which is a new scheme offering local businesses a way to reduce their environmental impact through a variety of projects which improve the Sefton environment for Sefton residents.

- Delivery of several retrofit programmes across the Borough, improving the energy efficiency of the most inefficient homes of the poorest residents. Such schemes reduce carbon emissions across the Borough but also help to reduce fuel poverty.

- Alongside partners we have carried out a feasibility study and public consultation for a Community Energy project in Southport.

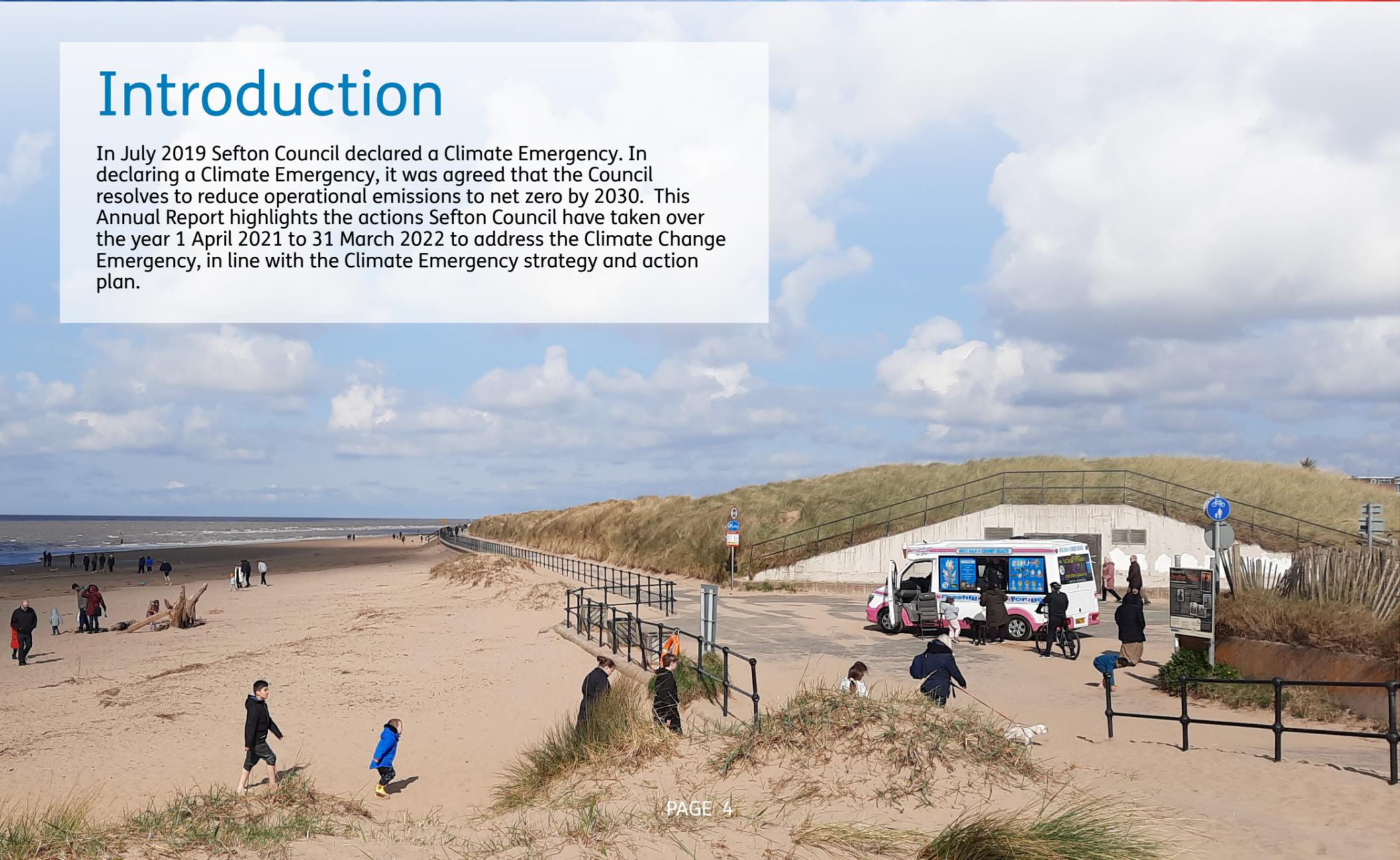
- Development of detailed Heat Decarbonisation Plans for 18 Council buildings. The plans set out how each site can move away from using gas to heat water and spaces, and be replaced with low carbon technology, such as heat pumps.

Significant work has also been undertaken this year to map out the route to net zero 2030, establishing what projects we need and estimating the costs involved. While the costs of a long-term transition from a Council powered by carbon to one that is emissions free – are difficult to forecast, it is clear that if the Council are to deliver net zero carbon, significant financial support will be required.



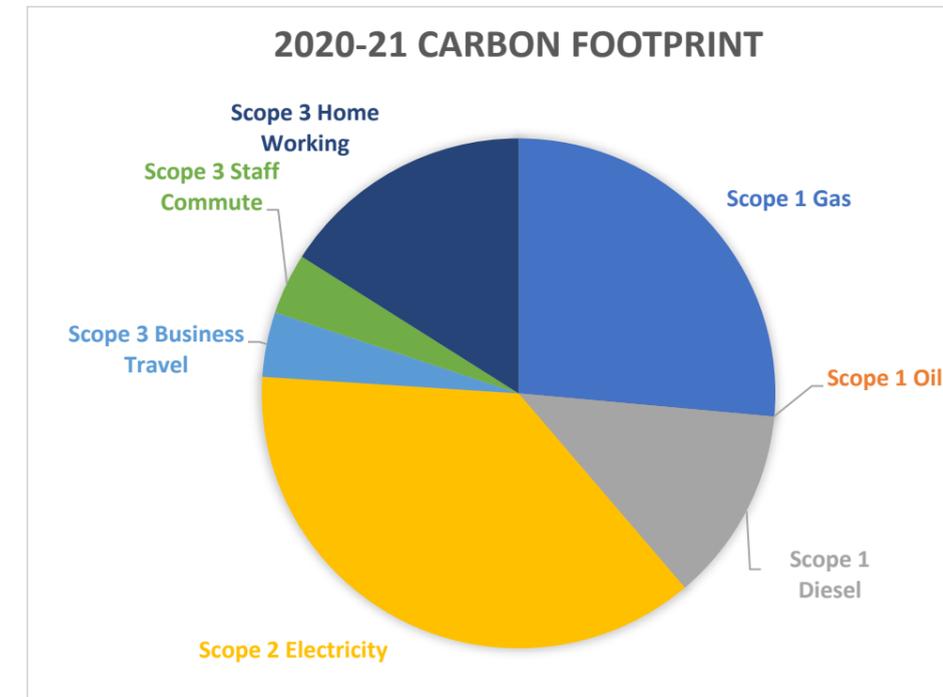
Introduction

In July 2019 Sefton Council declared a Climate Emergency. In declaring a Climate Emergency, it was agreed that the Council resolves to reduce operational emissions to net zero by 2030. This Annual Report highlights the actions Sefton Council have taken over the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 to address the Climate Change Emergency, in line with the Climate Emergency strategy and action plan.



Carbon footprint

The graph below shows the Council's operational carbon footprint for 2021-22.



The largest emissions come from electricity and gas use, followed by emissions associated with home working and fleet diesel.

Since setting our baseline carbon footprint in 2019-20 the Council have reduced overall emissions by 13% (10% in 2020-21 and 3% in 2021-22), which is positive, emissions are moving in the right direction. This has been driven by the move to agile working, the LED street lighting roll out and improvements to the national energy mix.

This year saw the easing of covid restrictions and the beginning of the 'new normal', as such there has been a small bounce back in emissions associated with staff travel and the staff commute. However, this has been small, and it is encouraging that we have not seen a significant jump in emissions. The Council continues to encourage agile working and develop our new agile working policy in a way which reduces carbon emissions as much as possible.

Decarbonisation projects are by nature long-term projects, which take time to develop, fund and deliver. We have several projects ongoing which will see significant carbon savings to the Council in the future. For example, we are one year into a four-year LED street lighting project and two Town Hall retrofit projects are still to deliver their full carbon savings - but when they do - they will reduce the Council's carbon footprint by around 15%.

There will also be a step change in emissions when the Council move to a Green/Renewable Electricity tariff in April 2023, which alongside the projects noted above will deliver a 55% reduction in our carbon footprint against the baseline.



Climate Change Action Plan

We said, We did

In last year's annual report, we set out four key priorities for the year 2021-22 and they have all delivered, as set out below.

1. COP26 Engagement

COP26 was an international climate change conference hosted in the UK. It ran from 1st November to 12th November 2021 and represented a fantastic opportunity to engage Sefton communities with the climate agenda. We ran a series of events across Sefton to engage the community including –

- 'I pledge' campaign across social media, asking people to pledge to make one change, as every action, no matter how small, makes a difference. We reached 40,000 people with our messages on Facebook, over 30,000 people saw our content on Twitter and around 10,000 people on our Instagram channel.
- In partnership with World Centre Liverpool, secondary school students across Sefton got involved in our very own mock COP26 session on the last day of the UN conference in Glasgow. Students had the chance to quiz local leader Councillor Roscoe and local business and each other on the future of our planet.
- For businesses we held a Net Zero Carbon event in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University via Invest Sefton. The event, organised by Sefton Council's business growth service,



saw local businesses gather at Formby Hall to understand how they could play a role in tackling the climate emergency. As a result, 30 businesses based in the Borough have now pledged to calculate and review their current carbon emissions and to set their own targets for becoming net zero carbon in the future.

- Green Sefton led two walks for the Sefton Community during COP26, to consider the impacts of the climate emergency on Sefton's coastal species and habitats, for example, evidence of roost of up to four species (Little Egret, Cattle Egret, Great Egret and Spoonbill) once considered exotic rarities from the Mediterranean, questions whether specialised species like the Natterjack Toad adapt to a changing climate. And the value of these habitats for absorbing wave energy and storing carbon. They were extremely informative sessions which were well attended in person – but also live streamed on social media watched by over 4,000 people and shared by partners including Sefton CVS.
- Sefton Council Staff were encouraged to take part in the ipledge campaign and complete their climate change eLearning module during the two weeks of COP26.



2. Green Electricity

As a large consumer of electricity to power our streetlighting, leisure centres and offices we committed in our Climate Change Action Plan to achieve 100% clean energy by 2030 through the purchase of green/renewable electricity. This action has been progressed. A new supplier has been procured, who will be supplying the Council from April 2023. The new supplier is able to offer a range of green tariffs.

3. Climate Change Risk Assessment

We committed to begin to look at the climate risks for Sefton and make them more mainstream - both in terms of the risk of delivery of our climate change strategy and carbon reduction, but also in terms of the impact changing climate will have on Sefton Council services.

As a result, in September 2021 the Audit and Governance Committee agreed for climate change risk to be on the Corporate Risk Register for the first time. With the proposed action to follow the strategy and deliver our Action Plan key to managing the risk.

In addition to this, Green Sefton have also reviewed the latest scientific data to map the flood risk in the future expected in Sefton as a result of climate change.

In 2022-23 this work will continue, reviewing the risks at a service level.

4. Local Offsetting

Sefton is blessed with a beautiful coastline and green space and with that come some opportunities to offer local offset for Sefton Council or other local businesses to off-set their environmental impact by planting or improving our local greenspace.

To this end, we committed to begin to explore this opportunity and this year Green Sefton launched 'Become a Business Supporter Scheme' which is a new scheme offering local businesses a way to reduce their environmental impact through a variety of projects which improve the Sefton environment for Sefton residents.





Carbon Reduction
Leadership
Innovation
Mobilisation
Adaptation
Transformation
Engagement and Education

Other projects

In addition to the four achievements above, there are also a number of other projects in 2021-22 which helped contribute towards achieving the aims of our strategy and action plan. The strategy and action plan have seven key principles to guide work in this area – guided by the acronym C.L.I.M.A.T.E

CARBON REDUCTION

Last year the Council approved a £12.750m invest to save project, the Street Lighting Asset Project, for the roll out of more energy efficient LED street lighting across the borough. The project begun this year and will take four years to complete. This year the team installed 5,942 new lanterns and 1,452 new column and lantern replacements. The work to date will save the Council 812,306 kwh of electricity. This is a positive scheme for the Council, it is win-win in terms of long-term cost savings and reducing carbon emissions.

This year also saw work begin at Bootle and Southport Town Halls to reduce emissions by improving the insulation and glazing. Both buildings are heritage buildings which makes this type of work technically challenging and expensive, however, the work was supported by Government Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The carbon reduction works to the site have been complete and will save approximately 59 tCO2 per year - reducing the Council's carbon footprint and energy bill as well as creating a more comfortable working environment for staff and visitors.

LEADERSHIP

The Council have a leadership role in the community, using our position to promote climate change action. As such, the Council

supported Sefton CVS to deliver their Climate Change focused Annual Conference for community groups in 2021, we have also run several climate themed events with residents, schools, and businesses in Sefton during the two weeks of COP26.

Our action plan also sets out that we will use our leadership position to lobby government on climate change topics. This year Sefton have joined the SOLACE climate change policy group (a network of public sector professionals who influence policy and future legislation, informed by the experience and expertise of members), where we have lobbied for increased consistency for Councils.

INNOVATION

Alongside partners we have carried out a feasibility study and public consultation for a Community Energy project in Southport. The innovative project is looking to replace and upgrade the existing wind turbine at the Southport Eco Centre car park and use the renewable energy generated to power the Council owned buildings nearby thus saving the Council money on energy bills, reducing carbon emissions into the environment, and creating a Community Energy Fund which the local community could access. Such innovative and collaborative projects are part of the solution to reducing carbon emissions and reducing reliance on the national energy network.

MOBILISATION

One of the biggest challenges for the Council is to reduce gas consumption. Gas is used primarily to provide heat and hot water to offices, leisure centres, civic buildings. The Council secured funding this year to mobilise in this area by developing Heat Decarbonisation Plans for 18 Council buildings. The plans have been developed and set out how each site can move away from gas towards low carbon technology, such as heat pumps. Work is now ongoing to consider the reports findings and obtain grant funding and align maintenance

programmes.

This year has also seen the introduction of a requirement for all Cabinet and Council decision papers which go to Members need to include a climate change impact assessment. This is helping to ensure that climate change is a visible part of the decision-making process and helping to embed climate change thinking into everything we do across the whole Council.

ADAPTATION

As well as reducing emissions, the Council is focused on ensuring it can cope with the future climate we are 'locked into' as a result of historic emissions. For example, how the Council can cope with increased heatwaves, increased storminess etc. This year, a new Flood Risk Strategy has been adopted by the Council, updated surface water flood model maps have been produced and a coastline future prediction report has been produced and the potential impacts assessed. This will help ensure the Council is resilient going forward.

TRANSFORMATION

Action on climate change offers an opportunity to improve social justice, with retrofit schemes to improve the energy efficiency of the more inefficient and poorest homes in Sefton one way to reduce the risk of fuel poverty as well as helping the environment. For example, the Council facilitated the ERDF funded RETOFIT for the FUTURE project this year which saw One Vision complete a major retrofit of Oxford House in Bootle – reducing fuel bills for residents, reducing emissions into the environment as well as transforming the aesthetics of the block.



ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

The Council run a dedicated environmental learning centre, the Eco Centre, offering learning opportunities for Sefton residents and school children and far beyond. This is an area where the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority believe Sefton are leading. Their ‘Pathway to Net Zero Report’ sets out that - “Sefton Council are leading on engagement with younger people, led by the innovative Eco Centre, with specialist resources for climate education on topics such as air quality with the ‘Clean Air Crew’. Sefton are also showing how carbon and climate outcomes can be integrated into all policy decisions across the whole Council.”

This year, young people in Sefton were involved in raising awareness of climate issues when they took part in the Coasts for Kids project. Working with scientists at Edge Hill University, Sefton Council and Southport Eco Visitor Centre they produced a series of short, educational videos to teach primary school pupils aged six to eight about the vital role that coasts play in our ecosystem. The video’s attracted action from across the world’s international coastal communities.

A new public interactive immersive room was built at Southport Eco Centre to teach children about air quality and wider climate issues. The design ensures that all children and families will be able to engage in the topic in a fun, vibrant and educational way. The new immersive room was installed this year and is now ready to welcome visitors.

LEARNING

Our understanding and knowledge of climate change is growing, and as such so does our approach. This year we have taken on board learning, adapting to new methodologies and ideas as they develop.

For example,

- The Local Government Association (LGA) have released a Carbon Accounting Tool to assist Council’s to report carbon emissions consistently and accurately. Due to differences in reporting timescales and activities considered within scope, the Council cannot wholly adopt the tool. But it has been used as a sense check of the Council’s carbon footprint/underlying data. The tool has highlighted improvements we can make to the fleet emissions data. We have adopted in this year’s carbon accounting. This small amendment means that our carbon footprint is more accurate and is more consistent with how other local Authorities using the LGA report.
- In January, Climate Emergency UK (a not-for-profit campaign organisation), assessed Sefton’s climate plans alongside all the other local authorities in the country. The assessment has provided a number of learning points for the Council to take forward and we have committed to use the ‘Checklist for Council Action Plans’ when reviewing our action plan next year.

AIR QUALITY

Climate change is also embedded within the work the Council are undertaking in relation to air quality. For example, Council officers have recently been working with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) on a joint emissions monitoring and enforcement project within Sefton. The project was focused on reducing air pollution from heavy goods vehicles operating within the Borough. Improvements resulting from the project, benefit both air quality and carbon reduction. The Council are also required to produce an Annual Air Quality Status Report, which sets out the work the Council are doing in more detail.



We can’t do this alone

Significant work has been undertaken this year to map out the route to net zero 2030, establishing what projects we need and estimating the costs involved. While the costs of a long-term transition from a Council powered by carbon to one that is emissions free – are difficult to forecast, it is clear that if the Council are to deliver net zero carbon, significant financial support will be required. For example, projects to replace gas heating/hot water in corporate sites will cost multi million pounds and they do not pay back as spend-to-save projects. Therefore, Government funding, such as through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme are critical to the success of the delivery of net zero carbon.

While we are taking steps to reduce the Council’s own carbon footprint and influence those, we have some control over. There is a much wider challenge across the Sefton borough to reduce emissions associated with homes, industry, business, agriculture and transport. In recognition of this we are working with agencies across the Borough (such as Merseyside Fire and Rescue, Registered Social Landlords, NHS bodies, Education etc), through the Multi-Agency Partnership. The Multi-Agency Partnership are working together on joint initiatives and actions to mobilise climate action across the Borough. This work will continue into 2022-23.





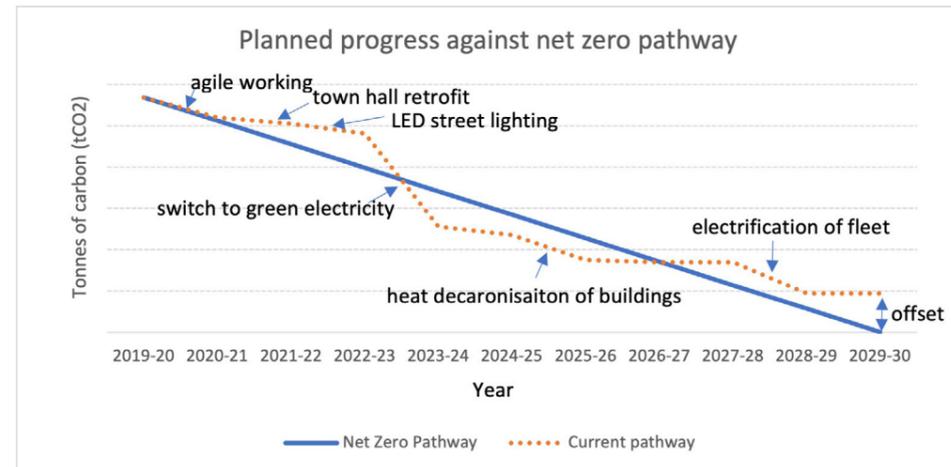
Future plans

In addition to the roll out of projects and processes noted above, in 2022-23 there are a number of key projects scheduled to commence, in line with the action plan.

- Next year, April 2022 to March 2023, will be the last year in Phase 1 of our action plan. We will use this time to review the action plan to ensure it is still fit for purpose and take account of any new opportunities or threats.
- We will ramp up our engagement with the community on climate change, specifically holding a consultation focusing on how stakeholders want to engage with the Council on this issue.
- We will finalise arrangements for the purchase of Green/ Renewable electricity for the Council.
- We will assess the impacts of climate change (risks and opportunities) at a service level across the whole Council (adaptation).

The graph below shows a simple linear pathway to net zero carbon by 2030 (Net Zero Pathway – shown by the blue line). The graph also maps the Current Pathway (red dotted line), showing where we are now and how we expect to get to net zero based on existing projects and plans.

Decarbonisation projects are by nature long-term projects, which take time to develop, fund and deliver. As noted earlier in the report, we have several projects ongoing which will see significant carbon savings to the Council in the future. The key projects and their associated carbon savings have been labelled on the graph, to show the Council’s long-term carbon reduction pathway and show that we are on track to achieve net zero by 2030.



Conclusion

This report sets out the progress the Council has made towards net zero carbon and the plans in place that will get help us progress further in the future. We are broadly on track but recognise that significant work remains to reach the net zero carbon goal. The Council are renewing our efforts to achieve the targets set, through laying the foundations for future work and quantifying the resource needed. We also continue to work with our communities and will do more in this area in the coming year.



