

Public Document Pack

Executive Member Decisions

Friday, 12th January, 2024
10.00 am

AGENDA

1. **EMD - Highways Decarbonisation Policy**
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EMD - Highways Decarbonisation Policy - APP1

Date Published: 12th January 2024
Denise Park, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Growth and Development
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Environment & Operations
DATE:	10 January 2024

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Growth and Development
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WARD/S AFFECTED:	(All Wards);
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SUBJECT:	Highways Decarbonisation Policy
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council declared a Climate Emergency and set a target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. This report presents the Highways Decarbonisation Policy to support the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the Council's carbon neutral ambitions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

- Approves the Highways Decarbonisation Policy and notes its proposed commitments, attached as Appendix 1.
- Notes the need for the development of a detailed Highways Decarbonisation Strategy and Plan to deliver on the Policies commitments.

3. BACKGROUND

As a local authority we have a responsibility to address the climate emergency and take actions to maintain a stable environment and reduce the impact of climate change so our residents and their future generations can achieve a good quality of life in line with our core corporate priorities and ambitions.

As a local authority we are only responsible for approximately 3% of emissions produced in our borough however we view the decarbonisation process as an essential part of providing a greener and brighter future. We understand our contribution to becoming carbon neutral is a key part of achieving the larger nationwide and global decarbonisation targets set.

As such Blackburn with Darwen BC have recognised climate change as one of our greatest threats and that it needs to be addressed in an urgent manner. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and produced a Climate Emergency Action Plan setting an ambition of becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030.

The commitments proposed in the Highways Decarbonisation Policy align with Blackburn with Darwen BC's overall corporate priorities and ambitions, Our Climate Emergency Action Plan and also the recommendation's made in the Paris Agreement, by the IPCC along with UK Legislation and central government Policy.

The Policy offers a proposed roadmap detailing how the Highways Department aspire to contribute to the target set by Blackburn with Darwen BC of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. This proposed roadmap is to form the basis of a more detailed Highways Decarbonisation Strategy and Plan to deliver on the commitments defined in this Policy.

If we are to meet the target of becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030, environmental considerations will have to be considered and weighted against our other financial and budgetary commitments.

Decarbonisation, especially within the highways industry, is a relatively new and evolving subject with many new solutions, materials and technologies being either in their early development stages or, currently not available at all within the marketplace. With this in mind this Policy represents a snapshot of our commitments and aspirations based on what solutions are currently available.

It is the intention that the commitments in this Policy are reviewed accordingly as new solutions, materials and technologies become available or, fail to be developed within the industry.

Regardless of solutions being available or not the Policy's overall ethos is for us to be forward thinking, innovative and to seek and trial solutions wherever possible to meet the commitments in a positive and collaborative nature, in line with our core vision and missions.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Production of a Highways Decarbonisation Policy is key to us setting commitments and proposals and is a statement of what is required by the highways department if we wish to attain our targets of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses with the overall aspiration of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

The main risks to the success of this Policy are:

- A lack of finance or resources to deliver the changes required and move towards using more innovative and carbon friendly products, vehicles, materials, technologies and techniques.
- A lack of advancements and developments in technologies within the industry which would limit potential materials being available in time for us to hit these targets.
- A resistance to change towards using more carbon friendly principles and solutions and adopting carbon friendly values and culture within our teams.
- Any political changes that may alter the Council's philosophy or response to the Climate Emergency.

It is therefore important for us to work towards trialling new materials, ideas and concepts where available and seeking out solutions to enable carbon reduction along with persuading Government of the need to invest in these carbon friendly solutions and changes to support our carbon reduction journey.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Highways Decarbonisation Policy needs to be acknowledged as a key part of the Highway

Department's Policy framework in particular the overall Highways Asset Management Plan along with other underpinning Policy's, Plan's and Strategies which it will inform and be informed by it.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Implementation of the Policy and its commitments has financial implications that will have to be weighed against the Council's other priorities as more carbon friendly materials, vehicles, technologies and solutions emerge for consideration and the need to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide become more imperative in order for us to meet our targets.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Governance structures will need to be put in place to oversee the implementation of the Policy.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Time, expertise and commitment will be required from officers to implement the Policy and to develop a detailed strategy and plan along with creating positive cultural changes within our teams' values towards decarbonisation and change towards adopting new principles and solutions.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

None

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION: 1

CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark Berry
DATE:	12/7/2023
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Highways Decarbonisation Policy



Highways Decarbonisation Policy



**Blackburn with Darwen
Borough Council**

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Document control

Title: Highways Decarbonisation Policy

Description:

The Highways Decarbonisation Policy defines Blackburn with Darwen BC’s position and intended commitments to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from highway-related activities to contribute to the Council’s aspiration of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Version	Date	Description	Author	Checked	Date Approved by BwD BC
V 1.0	6 July 2023	Initial Issue	Mark Berry		

The Highways Decarbonisation Policy should be reviewed and updated every 2 years as a minimum.

Blackburn with Darwen BC’s decarbonisation journey is a live and evolving process, as such; any major changes in high-level strategy, technologies or the development of new solutions or political changes that may alter the Council’s philosophy or response the Climate Emergency may trigger an earlier review to take place.

Comments and Feedback:

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council welcome constructive comments and feedback on the content of this Policy, which will enable us to revise the content improve and tailor our service to our customer’s needs.

Comments can be emailed to highways@blackburn.gov.uk, please enter “Comments on Highways Decarbonisation Policy” as your subject.

Terms, Abbreviations and Key Points

Terms and Abbreviations

The Council Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

The Policy Highways Decarbonisation Policy

Key Points

Key Points will be points of importance that have a significant or direct effect on the Policies commitments, targets or outcomes

Key Points will be highlighted like this throughout the document.

Critical Items

Critical Items will be items that have a direct effect on meeting the Policies commitments, targets or outcomes. These Items will ultimately determine the success of the Policy.

Critical Items will be highlighted like this throughout the document.

Financial Implications

£ Items that present potential financial implications will be highlighted like this throughout the document

Document alignment

Our Vision and Missions

It is the Council’s ambition to ensure Blackburn with Darwen remains a good place to live where people can enjoy a good quality of life in a prosperous borough where there are opportunities available for all.

The main themes being centred around building a more prosperous borough, creating opportunities for young people, building happier and healthier communities, tackling the budget challenge, being innovative and; most closely linked to this Policy, delivering on our Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The commitments and aspirations set within the Policy will help towards maintaining a stable environment so our residents and future generations can enjoy a good quality of life and we can deliver on building and maintaining happier and healthier communities, a more prosperous borough creating a bright future with opportunities for young people to live aligning with our overall corporate vision.

The aim of this Policy is to contribute to keeping the rate of global warming to within tolerable values to help avoid the catastrophic effects of climate change which would severely impact on our borough, its resident’s and their future generations.

This Policy aligns with the Council’s overall corporate priorities and ambitions, Our Climate Emergency Action Plan and also the recommendations made in the Paris Agreement, by the IPCC along with UK Legislation and central government Policy.

Ultimately we will find it increasingly difficult to fulfil our corporate priorities and ambitions if global warming, climate change and the severe consequences it brings are not addressed now.



Document hierarchy

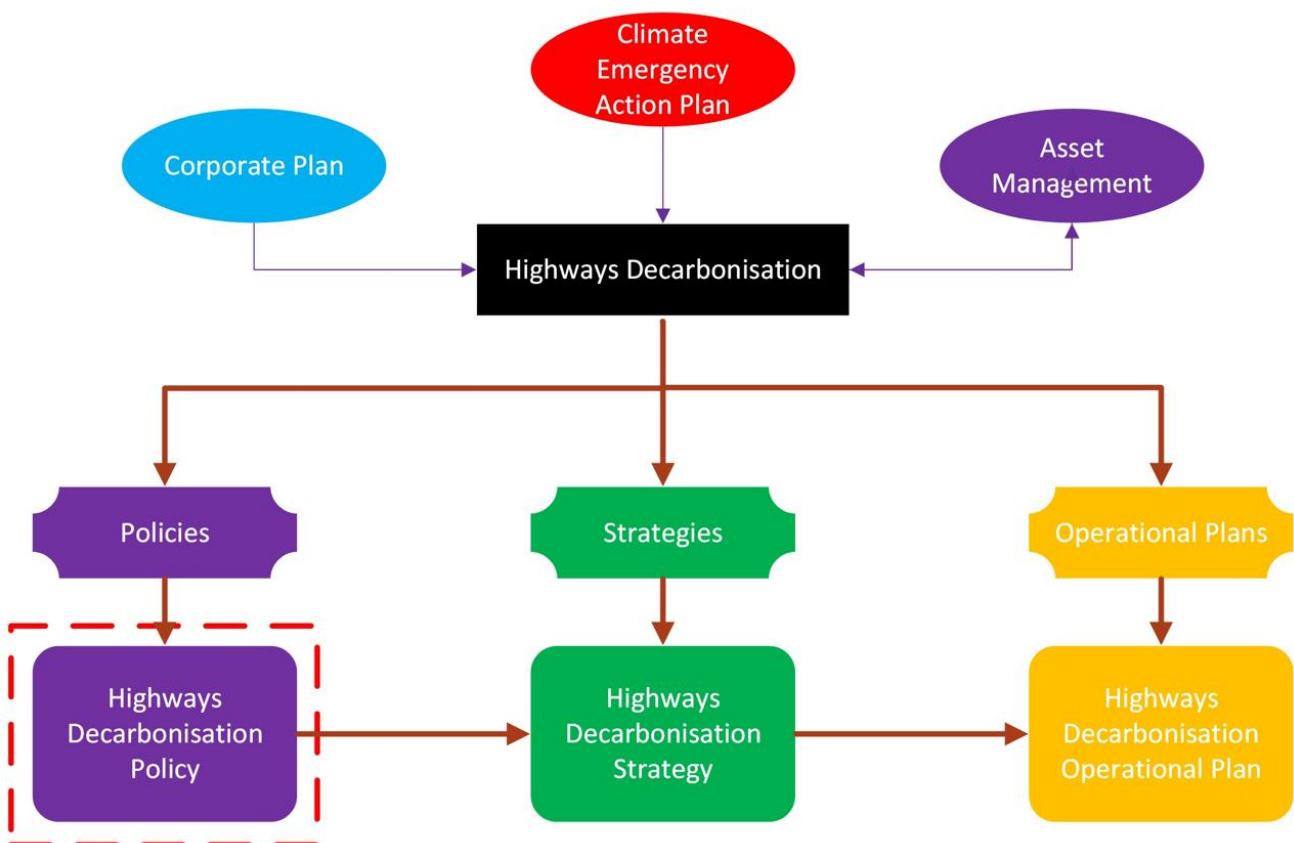
In response to global warming and the significant effects it will have on fulfilling our corporate priorities the Council have declared a climate emergency and produced a Climate Emergency Action Plan which:

“sets out what needs to be done in the local area to address climate change through resource efficiency, emissions reductions and behavioural change to help reduce future climate change and to adapt to the climate change impacts which are already inevitable”.

This Policy is a supplementary document to the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan and shares the same ethos, ambitions and principals as this high level document. This Policy will therefore be reviewed following any changes to the governing Climate Emergency Action Plan to ensure its content remains current, achievable and aligned with the Council’s latest position on tackling the climate emergency.

It is recommended this Policy is referred to and read alongside and in conjunction with, or prior to reviewing, any other relevant Policies, Strategies and Plans so its commitments and ambitions can be taken into consideration and adopted throughout our suite of Policy’s where required.

This Policy defines the overall scope for the Highways Decarbonisation Strategy and Operational Plan it governs and sits in the Highway Department’s Policy Framework locally as shown below:



Our Policy

Introduction

This Policy establishes the Council's commitments to reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other Greenhouse Gasses from highway related activities and defines the scope of the Highways Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plans it governs.

As a local authority we have a responsibility to address the climate emergency and take actions to protect the environment so our residents can achieve a good quality of life in line with our corporate vision.

Taking action now will not only benefit our borough in the future but will also help to address the larger global issue and the climate emergency with the Council playing their part to reduce the rate of global warming helping to prevent the catastrophic impacts this could have for us all.

As a large public body we also have responsibilities for providing many services that have a large impact on our customers, as such we have an image of trust and integrity and are in a position of great influence.

Our actions are very visible and if we wish our residents to change and adopt better environmentally sound practices it is essential we are first seen to be taking actions and making changes to tackle the climate emergency within our organisation and our Borough.

By doing so we can earn the respect of our customers and lead by example. By taking visible actions and introducing changes these values and ideas along with our positive attitude and responsibility towards tackling the climate emergency will be passed onto our customers.

Our Commitments

Our commitments and aspirations as set below address the issues of climate change and reducing the impact of global warming along with the catastrophic effects it could have on our borough, its residents and their future generations.

For the Highways Department this means delivering on the below overall Commitment:



To reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other Greenhouse Gases from highway related activities to contribute to the Council's aspiration of becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030.

We intend to achieve this by introducing the below series of measures to be implemented within the Highways Department to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as much as is practicably possible:



1. Seeking out, investigating, trialing and implementing new and innovative materials, solutions, techniques and technologies.



2. Adopting design and asset management techniques and principals to take into consideration our assets whole life cycle carbon emissions.



3. Reducing journey durations, logistics and vehicle movements from the points of origin to the points of delivery.



4. Introducing electric fleet vehicles, tools and equipment.



5. Establishing a positive culture and ethos across our teams to tackle the climate emergency together offering support, guidance and training where necessary.



6. Incorporation of the overall Commitment into other Policies, Strategies and Plans along with future LTP programmes and other forward works planning.



7. Supporting measures that the Council is pursuing through the Climate Emergency Action Plan to switch to clean and renewable sources of energy.



8. Supporting measures that the Council is pursuing through the Climate Emergency Action Plan towards recycling to reduce carbon emissions.



9. The introduction of removal measures to support our corporate objectives to capture more carbon as part of our overall plan to reduce carbon emissions.

Our Roadmap

The proposed decarbonisation roadmap shown below outlines the key milestones and targets to be achieved and offers a potential route for the highways department to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.

The roadmap gives a breakdown of yearly targets and aspirations that performance can be measured against and reviewed. This roadmap will also form the backbone of the more detailed Highways Decarbonisation Strategy and Plan.

Decarbonisation is a relatively new and quickly evolving subject within the highways industry with many parameters and solutions still being unknown. As such this proposed roadmap is to be subject to regular reviews to ensure its content remains current, achievable and aligned with the Council's Climate Emergency Action plan and our overall position on tackling the Climate Emergency.

1st year - Set up Establish infrastructure

Establish a collaborative "Action Group" of service leads and set up regular meetings. Investigate and select carbon capture toolkits for each service area which are able to feed into one overall toolkit for the Highways Department. Set up procedures, introduce toolbox talks and meetings to brief staff on the plan and spread awareness of Issues, culture and change through training.

2nd year - Set up Benchmarking

Establish a baseline figure of how much carbon we emit through population of carbon capture toolkits. Alongside collecting and compiling data begin to explore where we can reduce carbon, offset carbon and reinforce awareness of culture and changes through the established Action Group.

3rd year - Reduction Quantifiable reduction

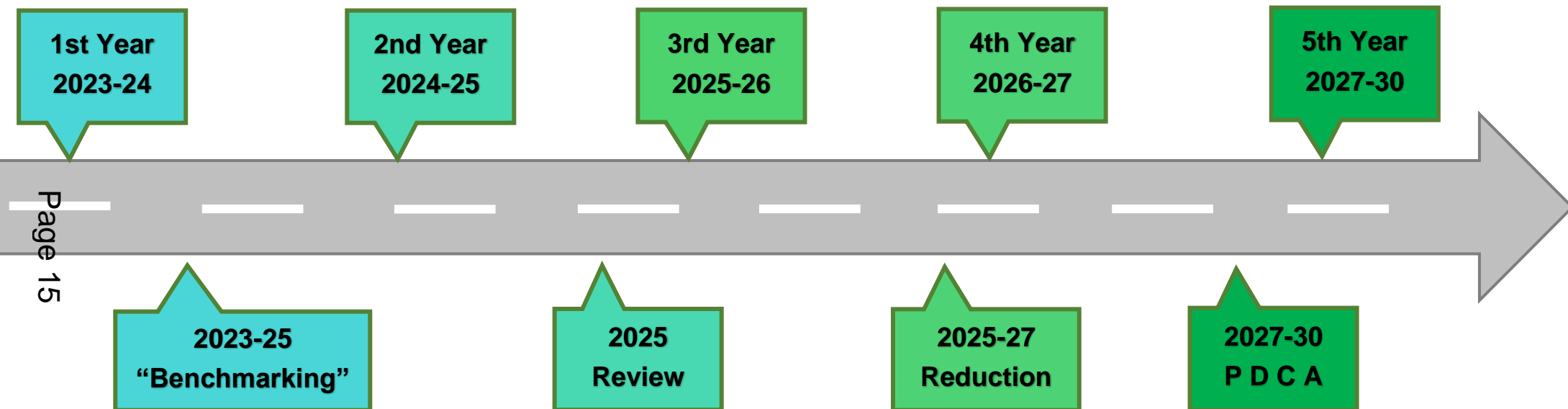
1st year of quantifiable reduction. As data is now available and toolkits are in place the 1st year of quantifiable carbon reduction can begin by putting into practice the targets/aspirations set in the action plans. Set up performance management meetings between initial Action Group members which will now become a "Steering Group"

4th year - Reduction Quantifiable reduction

2nd year of quantifiable reduction The Highways Decarbonisation Plan is now to be reviewed more frequently as our decarbonisation journey accelerates and changes are happening quickly. Continue meetings with Steering Group to discuss any issues or raise any concerns. Review and amend Action Plans as required.

5th, 6th and 7th years Continuous reduction

3rd, 4th and 5th years of quantifiable reduction. Continue to monitor reductions against targets and review and amend Action Plans as required. Continue with less frequent Steering Group meetings to raise any issues etc. All processes should be now fully operational with the combined goal of hitting the target of carbon neutral by 2030.



Set up period

Over the first 2 year period, alongside the "Setting up" process, begin to make choices to lower carbon production as much as possible and introduce and embed the decarbonisation ethos and culture across teams. Also train key staff, investigate lower carbon materials and explore options to reduce carbon within the "Action Group". Service leads are to filter down information to staff and their teams and feedback issues/ideas through the Action Group. First two years involve reviewing current contracts and frameworks to include requirements and targets for carbon reduction for highway schemes and services.

Review

Following benchmarking and collection of data review and amend the Action Plans and Highways Decarbonisation Plan to take into consideration attainable targets based on the data gathered and amend to suit any advances or changes in technologies, politics or the Council's response to the Climate Emergency. Thank team for work done so far and the successful completion of initial stages of plan.

Reduce

Initial quantifiable carbon reduction period whilst monitoring the effects keeping a close eye on the systems set up whilst reinforcing changes to make them normal practice, ensure momentum and engagement is maintained through the Action Group.

P D C A

Initialise a Plan Do Check Act continuous review process to ensure momentum is maintained and changes are now ordinary practice within teams and operations don't fall back into previous habits.

Continue to monitor reductions against targets and adjust Action Plans reactively to suit

Risks, issues and limitations

Due to the our decarbonisation journey representing new and uncharted territory and the sense of urgency within the industry many solutions, materials and technologies are either in their early development stages or, currently not available at all within the market place. This Policy therefore represents a snapshot of our commitments and aspirations based on what solutions are currently available.

With this in mind the main risks to the success of this Policy are:

- A lack of finance or resources to deliver the changes required and move towards using more innovative and carbon friendly products, vehicles, materials, technologies and techniques.
- A lack of advancements and developments in technologies within the industry which would limit potential materials being available in time or indeed suitable for us to hit these targets.
- A resistance to change towards using more carbon friendly principles and solutions and adopting carbon friendly values and culture within our teams.
- Any political changes that may alter the Council's philosophy or response to the Climate Emergency.

If we wish to meet the carbon reduction commitments and aspirations set in this Policy protecting the environment will have to take precedence over other, perhaps traditionally more important deliverables and financial targets.

£ Protecting the environment will have to be considered and weighted against our other financial and budgetary commitments balancing the cost of using more carbon friendly solutions and techniques against continuing to use more traditional methods as the need to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses become more imperative in order for us to meet our targets.

It is felt that initially the purchase and use of low carbon alternatives will be both risky and costly as products, materials, technologies and techniques are trialled and tested and suppliers gear up to manufacture and provide these products in larger quantities.

Once the industry becomes more comfortable with adopting and using lower carbon alternatives, technologies and solutions their costs will reduce as mass production and popularity within the market place grows. More traditional techniques and solutions will fall out of favour, both from carrying a high carbon penalty and a market driven to lowering carbon emissions, the supply and use of these traditional materials will become more obsolete and difficult to provide.

Further works and actions

To meet the commitments set in this Policy a more detailed Highways Decarbonisation Strategy and Plan are to be developed.

The Strategy will define the techniques and solutions to be employed and offer clear guidance on how we are to achieve the commitments and aspirations set in this Policy. The Strategy also provides information on changes that are to be made in order to meet these objectives along with a more detailed timeline of targets and objectives.

The Plan will provide actions and tasks to be undertaken on an operational level in order to achieve the commitments set out in this Policy using techniques, methods and objectives as defined in the Strategy.

The Plan will propose what resources are required to undertake the tasks along with identifying where change, support and guidance may be required. The Plan will also set deadlines for when specific tasks are to be completed and define ownership and actions.

Performance against the Plan is to be monitored and evaluated at regular intervals to ensure steps are being undertaken and tasks completed in order to achieve the commitments in this Policy.

The Plan represents the operational working document where any gaps, issues or problems will become apparent and raised through regular meetings, reviews and performance management mechanisms.

If it is felt these gaps, issues or problems are significant enough in nature to warrant change to the Policy's overall commitments and aspirations this Policy will be reviewed accordingly to ensure it remains current and achievable.