



# EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

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

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Growth and Development
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<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Highways Decarbonisation Policy</b>
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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

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