

<b>Cabinet</b>  15 December 2021	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director Place	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan (live document)</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Dan Jones, Director Public Realm Abdul Khan, Head of Energy, Sustainability & Private Sector Housing Abidah Kamali, Strategy and Policy Manager (Place)
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Forward Plan Notice Published</b>	24 November 2021
<b>Reason for Key Decision</b>	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria.
<b>Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome</b>	People live in a borough that is Clean and Green

### Executive Summary

In March 2019, the Council declared Climate Emergency setting an ambitious target of becoming a Net Zero Carbon Council by 2025. The Council's carbon emissions only account for a small percentage of the boroughwide carbon emissions. The Council in its leadership role is working with stakeholders and partners through the Partnership Executive Group (PEG) and has developed a Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan for the next five years (live document). This is the first step in working towards a Net Zero Carbon Borough by 2045 or sooner.

On behalf of the PEG, the council hosted a Climate Engagement event in March 2021, and then set up the Carbon and Climate Task Force (here after referred to as the Task Force) representing key stakeholders and partners as identified by the PEG. The Task Force met three times as a group and then through several thematic meetings developed the Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan (hereafter referred to as the Action Plan). This Action Plan will focus on a fair and just transition towards net zero carbon. The United Kingdom hosted the UN (United Nations) Climate Change Conference in November 2021 and the council at the same time, on behalf

of the PEG, launched the Action Plan. This Action Plan is owned by the PEG and will be monitored by the PEG regularly.

Development of the Action Plan has identified huge opportunities for efficiencies through collaborative working, the sharing of resources, practice, expertise, and data. The aim will be to utilise existing information and only invest new work on addressing gaps identified. Funding support will be requested from the Council, partners and Government as required. It is estimated that the 32 London local authorities need £206 billion to achieve net zero carbon.

The council has signed up to the UK100 Net Zero Pledge for the borough to be net zero by 2045 at the latest. This announcement was joined up with the launch of the Action Plan in November.

### **Recommendations:**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note that the council has signed up to the UK 100 Net Zero Pledge to become a Net Zero Borough by 2045 at the latest.
2. Note that Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan (live document) is agreed by the PEG and launched to coincide with the international climate event COP (Conference of Parties) 26.
3. Note next steps for a partner's initiative to establish a Climate Alliance and development of the Net Zero Carbon Borough Action Plan.

## **1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to becoming a Net Zero Carbon Council by 2025 and a Net Zero Carbon Borough by 2050 or sooner (since updated to 2045 or sooner). In May 2021, the PEG commissioned the council to set up the Task Force to commence development of a 3–5-year Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan for the borough (live document). This is the PEG's first step in its collaborative journey and a statement of intent towards becoming a Net Zero Carbon Borough. This report attaches the Action Plan with indicative resources required.

## **2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Council declared a 'Climate Emergency' at Full Council meeting on 20th March 2019 and made two ambitious commitments. Firstly, for the council to become net zero carbon council by 2025 and secondly, for borough to be net zero carbon by 2050 or sooner (since updated to 2045 or sooner). Tower Hamlets Cabinet adopted a [Net Zero Carbon Plan](#) which is a statement of intent on the commitments made. The agreement of the Action Plan supports

delivery of the commitment made for the borough.

- 2.2 The Task Force has worked in collaboration to develop the Action Plan for the borough, which begins the journey toward delivering on the ambition to meet the 2045 commitment. A failure to implement the Action Plan would cause significant environmental, public health, reputational damage, and risk.

### **3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

#### **Background**

- 3.1 In March 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency setting an ambitious target of becoming a Net Zero Carbon Council by 2025. The Council's carbon emissions only account for a small percentage of the boroughwide carbon emissions. The Council in its leadership role is working collaboratively with stakeholders and partners through the Partnership Executive Group (PEG) towards a Net Zero Carbon Borough by 2045 or sooner.
- 3.2 In March 2021, the Council hosted the Climate Engagement event, it then on behalf of the PEG set up the Carbon and Climate Task Force representing key stakeholders and partners as identified by the PEG. The Task Force met three times as a group and then through several thematic meetings developed the Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Partnership Action Plan (live document). The Action Plan is launched to coincide with the UN (United Nations) Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow.

#### **COP 26 Goals**

- 3.3 Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach. Countries are asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets that align with reaching net zero by the middle of the century. To deliver on these stretching targets, countries will need to:
- accelerate the phase-out of coal
  - curtail deforestation
  - speed up the switch to electric vehicles
  - encourage investment in renewables.
  - Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats.
- 3.4 The climate is already changing, and it will continue to change even as we reduce emissions, with devastating effects. We need to work together to enable and encourage countries affected by climate change to:
- protect and restore ecosystems
  - build defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure and agriculture to avoid loss of homes, livelihoods and even lives
- 3.5 Mobilise finance, international financial institutions to play their part and work towards unleashing the trillions in private and public sector finance required to secure global net zero.

- 3.6 Rise to the challenges of the climate crisis by working together.
- finalise the Paris Rulebook (the detailed rules that make the Paris Agreement operational)
  - accelerate action to tackle the climate crisis through collaboration between governments, businesses, and civil society.
- 3.7 On 19 October, the UK Government released its Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener. This strategy sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet the net zero target by 2050.
- 3.8 The Action Plan supports the UK Net Zero Strategy ambitions and COP 26 goals of mitigation, adaptation, collaboration, and finance.

### **Borough Environmental Facts**

- 3.9
- Tower Hamlets is making steady progress in reducing boroughwide carbon dioxide emissions. However, it remains the fourth highest emitter of carbon dioxide emissions in London with the commercial sector accounting for more than half the emissions, followed by the transport and domestic sectors.
  - Tower Hamlets has the most traffic in the country and transport is the main source of air pollution, responsible for nearly 25 per cent of carbon dioxide emitted.
  - 77% of Tower Hamlets residents (& 48 schools) live in areas of unacceptable air quality (breach EU and UK legal limits)
  - Tower Hamlets has 9th highest mortality rate attributed to human-made air pollution in London.
  - 60% of the borough still within the 30% most deprived parts of England.
  - Climate change disproportionately affects poor people in low-income communities. 11.2% of Tower Hamlets households are in fuel Poverty (higher amongst the elderly).
  - Tower Hamlets' location on the Thames and its densely populated landscape mean that the risks of flooding and overheating are greater than in many other parts of London.

### **Developing the Partnership Action Plan**

- 3.10 In March 2020, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Cabinet adopted the Net Zero Plan (NZCP). The NZCP is a statement of intent on LBTHs Climate Emergency declaration.
- 3.11 The NZCP includes recommendations for the Council to use its powers, influence, and leadership for the Borough to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2050 or sooner (since updated to 2045 or sooner). The initial 2050 timeframe follows the Climate Change Act 2008. Further interim targets for 2030 and 2040 are likely to be announced by Government, following COP 26.
- 3.12 The NZCP identifies 5 priority areas for action – Buildings, Transport, Power, Procurement, Waste (land and other).

- 3.13 In March 2021, the council hosted, on behalf of the PEG a Climate Engagement Event to commence work on the borough's Net Zero ambition. Over 70 representatives from the council and partner organisations participated and agreed to work together.
- 3.14 In May 2021, the PEG agreed to establish a Carbon and Climate Taskforce. The Task Force membership comprises of nominated representatives of the PEG from a range of sectors, organisations, and groups. The primary focus of the Task Force is to identify feasible interventions to be carried out by residents, council, and partners to tackle the climate emergency, reduce carbon emissions, and to inform development of the c.3-5-year Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Partnership Action Plan for the borough (live document) for launch in November 2021 (during COP 26). The Task Force will coordinate implementation of the Action Plan, reporting into the PEG.
- 3.15 This would be the beginning of creating partnership links and mobilising partners to collaborate on tackling the climate emergency in the borough's journey toward net zero.
- 3.16 The Task Force identified key themes, priority actions and co-ordinators (comprising of members of the Task Force) to support action plan development and implementation.
- 3.17 A summary of the of themes, objectives, priority actions concerning climate mitigation, adaptation and carbon capture, include collaboration, leadership, data, decarbonised systems, green skills and technology, awareness and sustainable behaviours and a greener environment are those identified, as illustrated in Table 1 below:

**Table 1 – NZC Themes and Priorities**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Overarching objective</b>	<b>Priority Action</b>	<b>Why is this area important?</b>
<b>Collaboration and Leadership</b>	Maintain collaborative activities borough-wide	Continue the TH Partnership Climate task force (as a collaborative climate alliance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Effective carbon action requires leadership, collaboration, and co-ordination</li> </ul>
<b>Data</b>	Create a transparent and consistent approach to Carbon Accounting - to use as a borough-wide real-time proxy baseline from which to improve	Identify common carbon accounting methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allows comparison and helps identify best practice which can be shared</li> <li>● Helps to provide a proxy measure for borough-wide carbon emissions</li> </ul>
<b>Awareness, Communication</b>	Increase awareness, educating and action	Establish a Community Carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides practical knowledge on why to act,</li> </ul>

<p><b>&amp; Engagement</b></p>	<p>within local stakeholder groups</p>	<p>Champions scheme (e.g., training on energy efficiency, working with various groups including children, faith communities, elderly)</p> <p>Co-ordinated TH wide communications on carbon - campaigns, messaging, virtual platform, and leadership including:</p> <p>Establish a Virtual Carbon Knowledge Hub and Network</p>	<p>and how - delivered by peers to enhance behavioural influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Raise awareness and influence behaviour change (partners and residents)</li> <li>● Develop and retain best practice knowledge in TH</li> <li>● Establish a practical mechanism to engage residents and businesses</li> <li>● Help to identify the skills gap, that can be actioned by local education providers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Green Jobs</b></p>	<p>Create a vibrant, inclusive, and diverse green economy across Tower Hamlets</p>	<p>Engage education providers in the borough on green skills, and local businesses on green jobs</p> <p>Develop local skills to enable mass retrofit of buildings and all tenures of housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve access to climate education, green skills, training, and apprenticeship pathways and improve linkage to local jobs in the green economy</li> <li>● Buildings account for around 40% of carbon emissions and it is vital to retrofit existing buildings</li> <li>● Having the skills within TH to deliver helps to deliver net zero for the borough and supports the green economy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Procurement</b></p>	<p>Stimulating carbon reduction, efficiency, and resilience in the supply chain</p>	<p>Embed systems change to respond to the climate emergency including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy, policy and decision making</li> <li>• Circular economy</li> <li>• Sustainable procurement</li> <li>• Green technology,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supply chain emissions are far more significant than direct emissions. To achieve net zero carbon, we must engage and encourage our supply chain to act and achieve the same goal</li> </ul>

		innovation, skills, and training • Funding, investment, and commercial partnerships	
<b>Demonstration of the possible</b>	Stimulating local action by showing what can be done and how	Showing what net zero carbon looks like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling people to relate to what zero carbon is, and some simple actions they can take in their everyday lives to move towards this</li> </ul>
<b>Greening and biodiversity</b>	Using enhanced local biodiversity to deliver climate mitigation and adaptation, wellbeing, and local action	<p>Community greening, growing, and enhancing biodiversity across the borough</p> <p>Engage in tree planting programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly - plants help to combat poor air quality, absorb carbon, provide shade, and combat heat island effect</li> <li>• Indirectly - helps to raise awareness of nature and could encourage local stakeholders to take wider climate action</li> </ul>

3.18 There are four main components/objectives to the Action Plan attached at appendix 2:

- 1) Mobilisation, collaboration, and co-ordination
- 2) Mapping, baselining, and connecting existing strategies and initiatives and communicating these
- 3) Identifying gaps
- 4) New initiatives and actions to speed us to net zero carbon

3.19 A summary of key actions identified to provide social (incl. health and wellbeing), environmental (incl. air quality), and economic benefits and support a just transition toward net zero include:

- Developing a climate alliance to collaborate, share good practice, knowledge and expertise and disseminate information, guidance, and tools amongst members (and lead delivery of the Action Plan)
- Improving EV (Electric Vehicle) charging infrastructure
- Use of co-design as a participatory approach to support a just transition toward Net Zero
- Embedding of climate change priorities into borough strategies, plans, policies, evidence bases and needs assessments
- Carbon accounting (including tool), sequestration (capture and storage of carbon dioxide) and decarbonized reliance systems

- Mapping and baselining of climate change risks to the environment, population(s) (incl. disproportionate impact on BAME communities), business, and services locally, including risks to healthcare services
- Online knowledge hub and protocol
- Climate champions linking into/expanding existing programmes established
- Corporate volunteering activities and carbon impact
- Campaigns (including linking existing) and community engagement for sustainable behaviours towards health and environmental benefits and climate adaptations (building local connectivity, diversity, and inclusion)
- Zero Carbon Open Door days/demonstration projects and case studies and use of as a medium for awareness, communications and engagement
- Delivery of Green school's project to reduce emissions (incl. through teacher training, session plans, resources, footprint measure), and explore inclusion of health protection and climate change into school curriculum
- Joint training programmes for staff and other stakeholders (economies of scale)
- Sustainable procurement (incl. food) and social value considerations and training for SMEs on supply chain access
- Launch of grant programmes for energy efficiency
- Green business/green skills database and improving access to green skills, qualifications, and jobs, in existing, new, and emerging green industries
- Tree planting, greening (incl. on vacant temporary/meanwhile sites), growing and biodiversity enhancement across the borough
- Retrofitting buildings (incl. guidance for refurbishment) and developing an approach to maximise uptake of government grants for homes of all tenures
- Delivery of Just Food and Climate Transition Programme

3.20 The Action Plan aims to complement and embed climate change priorities into borough strategies, plans, policies, evidence bases and needs assessments as appropriate.

### **Indicative Costs**

3.21 Partnership working on development of the Action Plan has identified huge opportunities for efficiencies to be delivered through collaboration, the sharing of resources, practice, expertise, and data. Through partnerships and collaborative working, the aim will be to utilise existing information and only invest new work on addressing gaps identified.

3.22 The Action Plan identifies existing initiatives that are resourced, financial resources nevertheless will be required from the PEG membership (including council) and Government for the delivery and expansion of identified initiatives in the Action Plan, if the borough is to reduce its carbon emissions. Current

costs of the Action Plan for the council and partner contributions (including time) are forecasted to be in the range of £176k - £460k. Funding sources where available will be identified.

- 3.23 It is estimated that the 32 London local authorities need £206 billion to achieve net zero carbon.
- 3.24 The identified lead co-ordinators (Task Force Members) for each thematic area are responsible for ensuring implementation of the actions with resources to support through identifying costed delivery plans, engaging their respective organisations and the PEG, and seeking funding and sponsorship opportunities as appropriate.

### **Climate Alliance**

- 3.25 The Task Force has agreed to establish a Tower Hamlets Climate Alliance to work collaboratively across the Council, partners, and residents to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the borough (carbon emissions) to net zero. This is a partner's initiative which will report into the PEG.
- 3.26 The scope and objectives of an Alliance are yet to be identified by members; however, this may include:
- Create a voice to tackle the climate emergency across the borough
  - Implement and update the Action Plan
  - Identify a suitable operating model reviewing its impact made, available resources and other circumstances
  - Share expertise, knowledge, information, ideas, practice, and resources
  - Map existing initiatives, campaigns and communicate these
  - Develop a net zero carbon communications campaign
  - Identify opportunities for new and innovative initiatives, actions, and collaboration opportunities with high impact
  - Support development of the borough's Climate Change Strategy/Borough Action Plan
  - Identify funding opportunities for net zero carbon activities and develop a consortium of bids where appropriate
- 3.27 The Council will work with co-ordinators of the Collaboration and Leadership theme to support the development of an 'Alliance' and in identifying a suitable operating model and membership threshold. This will be with the aim of an appropriate handover at the earliest availability to identified theme leads (co-ordinators). The Cabinet member for Environment and Planning will chair the first meeting of the Alliance where its scope, objectives and terms of reference and governance arrangement is considered.

### **Borough Net Zero Carbon Action Plan**

- 3.28 A Borough Climate Change Strategy and supporting Borough Net Zero Carbon Action Plan will be scoped and developed with the PEG.

The purpose of this will be to develop an evidence-based target (if sooner than 2045) for the borough to become net zero carbon. This will include an approach to achieve this and identified outcomes for a fair and just transition towards net zero.

- 3.29 This phase of stakeholder mobilisation and creation of partnership links for the Action Plan will help the next phase of working up the borough climate change strategy and action plan for 2045 (or sooner) and how we tackle the big emitting elements of the Borough which may need significant funding including: buildings (residential and non-residential), transport, waste etc.
- 3.30 The Borough Net Zero Carbon Action Plan will inform as appropriate, updates to the Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan (and its likely merger).

## **4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Analysis Initial Screening has been undertaken on the Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan (see Appendix 3). This found that there are no areas in the Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan which would adversely impact on any equalities target group. All sections of the community can benefit from the transition to a low carbon Borough.

## **5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,  
The NZC Partnership Action Plan is proposed to be delivered through a series of projects and initiatives across the carbon plan priority areas and key themes identified in the action plan. Best value implications will be assessed through the development of costed delivery plans and their likely carbon reduction impact for each of the actions proposed. This will be done working with taskforce members and the PEG.
  - Consultations,  
Members of the Task Force, council services and other partners and stakeholders have been involved in the development of the, reviewed and agreed the Action Plan. There is no statutory requirement to consult on the Action Plan.
  - Environmental (including air quality),  
The Action Plan will have a positive environment benefit through promoting sustainable and positive environmental behaviours, reducing carbon emissions, and improving air quality of the borough.
  - Risk Management,

If there is a lack of resources and/or buy-in from partners, there is a risk that many or most of the actions go undelivered, resulting in a failure to deliver on the climate emergency declaration, pledges, and consequent reputational damage. The identified lead co-ordinators (Task Force members) for each thematic area will be responsible for ensuring implementation of the actions with resources to support, engaging the PEG, and seeking funding and sponsorship opportunities as appropriate. The council will support this work and identify resources and opportunities as required.

Whilst some actions identified for the council can be delivered using existing budget/resource, the council will however need to identify additional funding for actions identified. A failure to do this, will impact on the climate emergency declaration and pledges made, and cause damage.

- Crime Reduction,  
There are no direct crime reduction implications arising from the NZC Partnership Action Plan. However, it is expected that any community greening and growing will design out anti-social behaviour.
- Safeguarding.  
There are no safeguarding implications arising from the Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.  
The implementation, monitoring and promotion does not involve handling personally identifiable information in any of the ways listed in the Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) checklist, either under the list for which PIA is always carried out, nor the list for which a PIA should be considered. It is therefore not considered necessary to carry out a PIA.

## **6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly emanating from this report which is seeking approval for the Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan.
- 6.2 Costs of developing the action plan have been staff time and these costs have been absorbed within existing budget provision. There will be costs associated with implementing the action plan and these will be the subject of separate reports and any Council related costs will need to be considered as part of the Council's Medium (and Long Term) Financial Strategy.

## **7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 imposes a duty on local authorities to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area and gives wide powers as to the steps which

may be taken. In addition, section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives local authorities a general power of competence.

7.2 The matters referred to in this report comply with the above legislation.

## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- Net Zero Carbon Plan [link](#)

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan (summary)
- Appendix 2 - Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan
- Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Analysis Initial Screening

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

Abidah Kamali, Strategy and Policy Manager (Place)

[abidah.kamali@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:abidah.kamali@towerhamlets.gov.uk)