

Climate Change Working Group Terms of Reference

Purpose and objective

To scrutinise the action taken as a result of the declaration of a climate emergency and regional commitment to cut carbon emissions significantly by 2030 with a view to becoming net zero carbon by 2038.

The working group will focus on two themes – ‘responsibility and coordination’ and ‘challenges and risk’ – and consider the following:

Responsibility and coordination

1. what arrangements and action plans are in place to implement, oversee and scrutinise progress of climate change work at each partner authority.
2. how partner authorities coordinate and cooperate with each other at a regional level and the role the Combined Authority plays.
3. how other stakeholders such as local transport operators, businesses, non-executive councillors, MPs and central government agencies/department are involved.

Challenges and risks

4. the level of available resources and staff currently able to work on climate change.
5. what possible funding sources and approaches are available to fund climate change activity – in the context of increasingly limited funding opportunities across local government.
6. the level of strategic alignment between partners and what unique strategic challenges are faced by some partners but not others.
7. how well other policy and service areas from economic growth, housing, planning and transport through to health & social care and community services are aligned with environmental policy.
8. what impact further or no devolution could have.
9. the possibility of developing a universal ‘toolkit’ – available to everyone – to better assess regional impact and monitor progress.

The working group is looking into this issue because:

1. Climate change has become an issue of renewed national and international importance.
2. Although it is a global issue, there are areas within the direct and indirect control of local government partners where focused interventions could make an impact.
3. As of June 2019, the Combined Authority and all its partner councils have declared a climate emergency.
4. A new ambition to ‘support clean growth’ was included as one of the Combined Authority and LEP’s four priority areas in the Corporate Plan for 2019/20.
5. The region now aims to be a net zero carbon region by 2038 ‘with significant progress made by 2030’.

Plan and outcomes

The working group will:

1. gather evidence from the members and officers identified as leading on climate change work at each partner authority through evidence sessions, interviews and questionnaires.

2. produce a report of their findings and any recommendations for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members

The working group will be chaired by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's environment spokesperson and include the committee's transport spokesperson.

Members will be expected to support the evidence gathering process by conducting research and holding meetings with key colleagues as necessary.

The working group may invite non-members to act in an advisory capacity as co-optees.

Support arrangements

The working group will be supported in its review by the scrutiny officer.