

Consultative Draft East Lothian Climate Change Strategy 2019–2024

Executive Summary

Climate Change: Background and Policy Context

Climate change is very much in the public eye at present. People across the world are considering the implications of decisions and lifestyle choices on the increasing carbon emissions which contribute to global warming. We can all play our part in contributing to the national and international efforts to reduce carbon emissions, with the social, economic and environmental implications this will have.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 helped to establish Scotland as a world leader in tackling climate change, introducing ambitious targets and legislation to reduce Scotland's emissions by at least 80% by 2050. The Act places specific duties on public bodies in Scotland with respect to climate change. This Climate Change Strategy sets out how East Lothian Council will address the duties of public bodies under the Act, which are:

- To contribute to the delivery of the carbon emission reduction targets set out in the Act;
- To help deliver Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation programme; and
- To act in the way it considers is most sustainable.

As a public body, East Lothian Council is expected to lead by example in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and to successfully deliver the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan 2018–2032 locally by influencing and enabling positive behaviours, driving change, and acting as an exemplar of climate action and low carbon innovation in the transition to a growing, sustainable and inclusive low carbon economy.

Scotland's climate is already changing and we have to respond to the challenges this is causing and the opportunities this brings. In future years it is predicted that temperatures will rise, winter rainfall will increase whilst summer rainfall decreases, and heatwaves, droughts, storms and floods will become more frequent. This will have a major impact on East Lothian's communities, businesses, infrastructure and natural environment.

Purpose and Strategic Vision of the East Lothian Climate Change Strategy

This Climate Change Strategy covers two major aspects of climate change:

- **Climate Change Mitigation:** this section of the Strategy sets out how we will reduce our carbon emissions to meet the challenging targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and help to mitigate against further global temperature rise; and
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** climate change is already impacting upon us, and this section sets out how we will adapt to and prepare for future changes in our climate. This will help to reduce inequalities, and enable our communities and businesses to be more resilient for the future.

This Draft Climate Change Strategy sets out how East Lothian Council will tackle climate change locally in East Lothian, and how it will work in partnership to ensure that East Lothian can play its full part in the national and international efforts to reduce carbon emissions. The Strategy will contribute to raising awareness of climate change challenges

and opportunities in East Lothian. It also sets out the priorities and actions for the Council and the wider East Lothian community to mitigate against and reduce the impacts of climate change and the inequalities that can result, and to act sustainably.

Taking account of the policy context, the key climate change challenges for East Lothian, and the local context and feedback from local people, communities, businesses and organisations, the strategic **Vision** for the Climate Change Strategy is:

‘We will work in partnership to achieve an even more prosperous, fair and sustainable East Lothian, with flourishing low carbon communities and a thriving low carbon economy, contributing to national and international efforts to reduce carbon emissions.’

The Strategy brings together a wide range of plans and strategies across the Council into one place, enabling a co-ordinated Action Plan for mitigating against and adapting to climate change.

The **purpose** of the Climate Change Strategy is:

- To set out a coordinated approach, framework, outcomes, priorities and action plan for the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation across East Lothian;
- To enable East Lothian Council to continue to meet its statutory climate change obligations;
- To contribute to the development of a sustainable, resource efficient and equitable East Lothian, with a thriving low carbon economy, a healthy and diverse natural environment, and flourishing low carbon communities that are resilient to the effects of future climate change; and
- To enable East Lothian to play its full part in the national and international efforts to reduce carbon emissions and tackle global warming.

The Strategy will also contribute to:

- Reducing Inequalities
- Improving Health and Wellbeing
- Contributing to a Thriving Local Economy
- Education, Awareness-raising and Behaviour Change
- Ensuring Cost-effective Action

The Strategy sets out what national bodies, local organisations, communities and groups are already progressing around the county to encourage a low carbon and more sustainable East Lothian, and the Council’s role in helping our communities and businesses to adapt to climate change impacts and encourage the move towards a low carbon East Lothian.

Developing the Strategy

The Draft Strategy has been informed and shaped by feedback and information gathered from the public during an initial consultation on the development of the Strategy. It was also developed in partnership with the Climate Change Planning and Monitoring Group and key stakeholder organisations. This informed the identification of the key issues and challenges, and the setting of the key outcomes for the Draft Strategy.

Outcomes of the Climate Change Strategy

The following Outcomes have been identified to guide activity and to promote and set out how the Council, and the wider East Lothian community, will achieve this vision:

Outcome 1: A Low Carbon and Sustainable Council.

East Lothian Council will reduce its overall carbon emissions from the Council's own estate and operations by 2.5% per year relative to population size, over the 5 year period of the Climate Change Strategy.

Outcome 2: A Resource Efficient and Sustainable East Lothian.

Sustainable East Lothian will be a place of social equity underpinned by sustainability; working towards a zero waste East Lothian, and a low carbon and energy efficient county; ensuring the next generation has the resources they need to thrive.

Outcome 3: Active Travel and Sustainable Transport are used for Everyday Journeys.

East Lothian will have well-connected communities with increased use of active travel and sustainable transport modes to access services and amenities.

Outcome 4: A Place Encouraging a Low Carbon Lifestyle.

East Lothian will be a place which encourages the transition to a low carbon lifestyle and reduces inequalities in our communities, by promoting green networks, active travel and outdoor play, local food growing, local amenities, and community meeting places, where everyone is connected to the outdoors and nature thrives.

Outcome 5: A Low Carbon and Sustainable Economy.

East Lothian will have a sustainable and digitally-connected local economy, with thriving, low carbon and sustainable businesses, at the heart of vibrant local communities, contributing towards a sustainable, fair and equitable East Lothian.

Outcome 6: A Healthy and Resilient Natural Environment.

East Lothian will have healthy, diverse natural ecosystems that support biodiversity and the wellbeing of our communities, functioning to off-set carbon emissions, acting as a key force in adapting to climate change, and resilient to changes in climatic conditions.

Outcome 7: A Well-Adapted East Lothian.

East Lothian's natural environment, buildings, infrastructure and society will be adapted to the effects of climate change, and its communities will be resilient to further changes in the future.

Outcome 1 sets out how the Council will lead by example by reducing carbon emissions and by acting sustainably. The Strategy sets out the proposal that the Council will reduce its overall carbon emissions from its own estate and operations by 2.5% per year relative to population size, over the five year period of the Strategy.

The Strategy details how the Council has already reduced its annual carbon emissions by 17% over the past 4 years, and is making good progress in respect of emissions reduction, despite significant population growth. However, it is important to note that this current dataset is incomplete as it does not yet include the emissions associated with the Council's Transport Fleet, due to incomplete recording of fleet data. A new system for more accurately recording fleet data will enable the Council to include the full dataset in 2018/19 and set a new baseline for future reporting of the Council's carbon emissions.

During the period of the Strategy, the Council will set specific emissions reduction targets for aspects of the Council's estate, management and operations, and will undertake detailed future carbon emissions projections to inform the setting of accurate future targets. These

proposals, including the analysis of the full dataset, incorporating fleet data to establish a new baseline measurement in 2018/19, are reflected within the Action Plan. This will improve the extent and integrity of the data collected.

Outcomes 2 to 6 set out how the Council will work in partnership with local communities, businesses, organisations and individuals to mitigate against climate change and achieve a low carbon and sustainable East Lothian. These outcomes address the infrastructure, place-making, resource management, behaviour and lifestyle changes needed to achieve a low carbon county and a thriving low carbon economy.

Outcome 7 sets out how the Council and the wider East Lothian community can adapt to climate change and further anticipated climatic events. It sets out how the Council will lead by example in preparing for and managing climate change impacts, and will work in partnership to develop resilient communities, ensure businesses are prepared, and help ensure our natural environment can help us adapt to climate change.

The Action Plan underpins these outcomes. The Action Plan seeks to deliver local actions and target resources over the five-year period of the Strategy, and looks ahead to the longer-term actions that will also be required. The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

The Strategy also includes the flexibility to amend the targets for carbon emissions reduction in response to anticipated legislative changes over the five year period of the Strategy. The Action Plan reflects this by setting actions for the short, medium and long term, and by building in flexibility in target setting.

The Council will work in partnership with our local communities, businesses, organisations and individuals to achieve these outcomes, as no one organisation can do this alone. We need to work together to address this global challenge across all aspects of our society.

Comments on the Draft East Lothian Climate Change Strategy

The purpose of this Consultative Draft East Lothian Climate Change Strategy is to provide a further opportunity for feedback prior to publication of the final document. Comments, views and suggestions are invited on the Draft Strategy, including its proposed priority outcomes and actions to tackle climate change across the county. In particular:

- Have we captured the key issues and challenges that we face across the county?
- Have we set out appropriate priority outcomes?
- Are the actions we propose to take considered to be appropriate?

A Consultation Questionnaire is available online at eastlothianconsultations.co.uk to help you respond, although you do not have to use the questionnaire to respond if you do not wish to do so. Comments are invited IN WRITING by 5pm on Monday 22nd July 2019.