

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

3 October 2024

TITLE:	Questions of which notice has been given
CONTACT OFFICER:	Linden Vernon – Head of Democratic Services
WARDS INVOLVED:	Non-Specific

1. Question from Jeremy Wight:

The latest data on greenhouse gas emissions broken down by local authority area show that while the total emissions from High Peak that are within the scope of influence of the Council fell by 25% over the 17 years between 2005 and 2022, from 914 to 672 Kilotonnes of CO2 equivalent, this fall of 242 KT is more than accounted for by the reductions due to decarbonisation of the electricity grid, amounting to 284 KT, which is not something for which the Council can take credit. Overall progress is far short of the reductions required to meet net zero targets and safeguard our climate and the ecosystems on which we all depend. What is the Council doing to ensure that much faster progress is made in future, consistent with treating climate breakdown as the emergency which it is?

Response from the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and the Environment:

High Peak Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency on October 15th 2019. The declaration commits the Council to become carbon neutral in its internal operations and the services it delivers, by 2030, and to work with partners to help achieve this target for the High Peak as a whole. In response, the Council produced a Climate Change Strategy that focuses both on the Council's own emissions and also on supporting the reduction of emissions from across the Borough.

The Council recognises the response to climate change is in both mitigation, in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and adaptation, protecting our Borough, residents, businesses and the natural environment from changing and extreme weather events.

Understanding the importance of our natural ecoservices, the Council also made a Nature Recovery Declaration in 2023 in recognition of the urgent action that is needed to reverse nature's decline. The Council has worked with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to develop a Plan for Nature. The Council consulted on the contents of this plan

over the summer is currently updating the plan to take account of responses. Following this, the Plan will be taken to members to vote on adoption.

The greenhouse gas emissions emanating from High Peak are elevated because of the large-scale quarrying activity. Despite the products of this industry being used across the country and beyond, the emissions are recorded as originating from High Peak. The Council has engaged early with the potentially transformative Peak Cluster initiative, which aims to capture, transport and permanently store carbon dioxide emissions from the cement and lime industry.

The Council's focus to date has been on reducing its own emissions. A report on the progress over the last 12-months and future actions will be presented to Councillors by the end of the year. Key actions to reduce the Council's own emissions have been the replacement of gas boilers with air source heat pumps and solar panels at Buxton Leisure Centre and inclusion of energy efficiency in all major refurbishments. Through our strategic partners, our fleet options are being thoroughly tested and trialled, the results of which will be used to inform future decisions on fleet strategy. Separately, as a social housing landlord, the Council has assigned funding to support improving the energy performance of these houses.

The Council has also increased the capacity of its climate change team to include both a biodiversity officer and a domestic energy officer to support strategic development and project delivery. The officers work across departments to ensure that climate and biodiversity are considered across all the council's operations.

All Heads of Service and Project Managers have had training on carbon literacy and climate and nature are both cited as considerations on all Council Reports. The Council has a cross-party Climate Change Working Group, of which the members have all had climate induction training to support embedding climate thinking in decision-making

2. Question from Councillor Hopkinson:

'Regarding the Glossop Market Hall project, what measures did High Peak Borough Council put in place to ensure the building met current regulations, in particular the Fire Safety Regulations, has a sprinkler system been installed which has had to be replaced and if so what is the cost of the replacement and if not the cost of the new compliant system as well as the omitted fire escape and is there a penalty clause written into the contract?'

Response from the Leader:

As part of the design development period, information on the scope of the proposed works was prepared, including a fire strategy that formed a Building Control application submitted to the Derbyshire Building Control Partnership (DBCP).

Following receipt of the application, DBCP has undertaken a review of the application and has issued a Building Control Tracker, which identifies issues/conditions that require further information from the Council's Professional Design Team/Contractor to close them out.

During the construction period, officers from DBCP attended the site to inspect the work to ensure that it was in line with the relevant regulations.

No sprinkler installations have been installed as part of the contract works. The Council's Design Team continue to liaise with the DBCP to ensure that all statutory compliance measures are addressed as part of the project works. Following completion of the works to the satisfaction of DBCP they will issue their completion certificate.

Appropriate contractual arrangements and discussions are in place with the Council's contractor and will remain so until completion.