

Guidance for Schools/Academy Trusts to inform the creation of a Climate Action Plan

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Contents

1. **Definition of a Climate Action Plan**
2. **Purpose and Status of this guidance**
3. **Background**
4. **School/MAT Commitment**
5. **Next Steps**
6. **Further Resources**

1. Definition of a Climate Action Plan

A comprehensive step by step guide to establish evidence led planning to reach Net Zero Carbon.

2. Purpose and status of this guidance

This guidance is created for Church of England school governing boards and their Senior Leadership Team to facilitate the formation of a Climate Action Plan, subject to pending guidance provided by the Department for Education, this template provides some suggested text which will require variation to reflect the agreed policy of the School/Academy Trust to help implement climate adaptation measures and understand the impact of energy and water use in each context.

3. Background

In 2020 General Synod for the Church of England made a declaration to 'work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target' [2].

In response the National Environment Programme for the Church of England commissioned a [Routemap](#) setting out the vision for the whole church estate to be Net Zero Carbon. This is defined within the Routemap as '***the reduction as far as possible of all in-scope carbon emissions (from the oil, gas and electricity we use in our buildings and petrol and diesel transport) and the removal of an equivalent amount of carbon from the atmosphere for the remaining in-scope emissions by use of accredited offsetting schemes.***'

The 2030 target is focused on Scope 1 emissions; ***Building emissions from oil & gas heating and business travel in owned petrol/diesel vehicles***, and Scope 2 emissions; ***generation emissions from the electricity we use to run our buildings.***

To achieve this demands energy efficient buildings which support technology required for the decarbonisation of the estate including the installation of renewable energy as applicable in each context.

[2] [See General Synod sets 2030 Net Zero carbon target | The Church of England](#)

In April 2022, the Department for Education published the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and set out an ambition to provide support to embed sustainability across the sector.

4. School/Academy Trust Commitment

- To take action to reduce year on year emissions across our school estate(s), to take all reasonable steps to work towards becoming a net zero carbon school and to report on progress annually to the governing body/board and the Diocesan Board of Education.
- To embed sustainability and decarbonisation within policy creation and decision making, working through the lens of our children and young people and ensuring the protection of future generations by acting proactively to reduce our impact on the environment, placing future generations at the heart of decision making and reporting.
- To ensure the curriculum supports learning about nature, the causes and impacts of climate change and the importance of sustainability.
- To support children and young people to use their voice to advocate for a more sustainable future [3]. To explore ways in which the school/ Academy Trust's distinct theological Christian vision supports an active culture of justice and responsibility in the context of creation care.
- To understand the short-, medium- and long-term risks of climate change for the school site(s) and school community including increased heat risk, flood risk and water scarcity.
- To review and understand progress indicators and objectives against timelines and report annually on policies and programmes.

[3] For example by enabling children and young people to contribute to Diocesan Environment Working Group meetings.



5. Next Steps

A Zero Carbon Execution Plan [4] has been provided by the Church of England Education Office (CEEEO) to schools and Academy Trust's which offers a step-by-step guide to reach net zero carbon across the school estate. The guidance is underpinned by a requirement for whole community engagement which is supported through the creation of further bespoke resources and guidance through the CEEEO.

[x] school/ Academy Trust commits to implementing the Execution Plan within the organisation starting by gathering information as required to underpin the evidence-based planning to secure the basis on which to start acting in each context including:

- To elect a sustainability lead, engaged to proactively secure evidence required to understand and reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by the end of the decade. To hold Senior Leadership to account, to advise, encourage and embed milestones into the overarching objectives for the school/Academy Trust and to make recommendations which the governing body/board will take all reasonable steps to implement thereby embedding an estates vision which works toward becoming Net Zero Carbon.
- To install and understand smart meter data, utilising the data in the curriculum [5] and to empower the school community to understand its energy consumption.
- To eradicate single use plastics and encourage the use of reusable and recyclable materials
- To access support from the DfE School Commercial Services [6] to procure green energy at the point of contract renewal.
- To utilise the Capital Asset Management Plan [7] and CDC [8] information to identify 'quick wins' and,
- To proactively identify and prepare for funding opportunities utilising the Buildings and Energy Self Audit tool [9], and
- To commission/implement a Heat Decarbonisation Plan [10] across the organisation and where required secure further technical analysis, and
- To ringfence [20%] of the capital funding [11] received to deliver fabric improvements as required to ensure energy efficient buildings to get prioritised sites 'retrofit ready [12]', and
- To engage in the Practical Path and Annual Resilience Statement to ensure the senior leadership and governance teams are climate aware.

[5] For example see Home | Energy Sparks

[6] Buying for schools: get free help from procurement specialists - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[7] <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>

[8] Condition Data Collection 2 (CDC2) programme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[9] For example identifying all boilers that are 10-15 yrs old and approaching end of life

[10] The Energy & Buildings Self-Audit improves readiness to: scope and procure - once funded improve efficiency and cost of HDP do any pre-HDP actions.

[11] School capital funding - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[12] Essential building works to get the school estate ready to carry out planned capital works, to resolve any issues or barriers. Also called 'enabling work'.

6. Further Resources

- a) [Climate Action Advisors - Lets Go Zero](#)
- b) [Sustainability and climate change strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- c) [A Net Zero Accelerator feasibility study](#) is underway with LocatEd, exploring the potential for rapid rollout of energy efficiency and generation initiatives which will enable targeting of funding, including possible loan and delivery models.
- d) Awaiting DfE digital support hub.
- e) [Joint statement on climate change by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch | The Archbishop of Canterbury](#)

Political impartiality[15]

'Teaching about climate change, and the scientific facts and evidence behind this, does not constitute teaching about a political issue and schools do not need to present misinformation or unsubstantiated claims to provide balance.'

However, in climate education there is relevant political and scientific debate about the best ways that climate change can be addressed – there are different views and opinions, and different solutions. Debates on political and policy change need to be grounded in wider citizenship education on democracy and democratic values and topics should be handled in line with schools' legal duties on political impartiality.'

[15] [Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

