

Calderdale's £1m Climate Emergency Fund

Calderdale Council
Friday 26 May 2023

Summary

The £1 million Climate Emergency Fund enables voluntary, community and faith groups, charities, CICs and schools across Calderdale to cut carbon by supporting projects that lead the way in saving energy and combating climate change. This supports the target for our whole Borough to be carbon neutral by 2038.

Cllr Scott Patient, Calderdale Council's Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Resilience, said:

"Local people want to play their part to protect the planet. We've always had kind and talented people in Calderdale doing their bit, and now we're delighted to create even more opportunities for community action through the £1 million Climate Emergency Fund. The size of this fund shows our commitment to making Calderdale a zero-carbon place."

"We were impressed with the proposals that local organisations put forward in their funding bids and are excited to see their projects making a difference in Calderdale."

The problem

With its steep-sided valleys and riverside communities, Calderdale is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. In recent years, the number and severity of flooding events in the borough has greatly increased. Our climate has changed - and Calderdale is flooding more frequently than at any time in history.

In 2019 we declared a climate emergency. This recognised the threat and challenge that climate change is to Calderdale. Since then, we have made major progress:

- Hit our historic target to reduce CO2 emissions by 40% by 2020
- Declared a bold and ambitious target of Net Zero emissions by 2038
- Modelled an Emissions Reduction Pathway which shows how to cut our fossil fuel use
- Developed a Climate Action Plan, setting out the action that needs to be taken in Calderdale before 2025 to set us on our path to a Net Zero future

One thing that the [Emissions Reduction Pathway](#) made clear was that we need the support of the local community to reach our ambitious targets. In 2021, Calderdale Council launched the £1million Climate Emergency Fund in partnership with Community Foundation for Calderdale (CFFC) to support community groups to deliver projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions in the borough.

The solution

The goal of the £1million Climate Emergency Fund is to help voluntary, community and faith groups, charities, CICs and schools to make energy savings and carbon reductions, supporting the target for our whole Borough to be carbon neutral by 2038.

The Climate Fund was originally proposed in February 2020, with Calderdale Council's Cabinet approving proposals for spend and governance in January 2021. CFFC was chosen to manage the scheme as they already have strong links with the voluntary community sector and have delivered similar community grant schemes in the past. Calderdale Council officers provide technical assessment comments on applications and CFFC's Awards Panel make award decisions.

The funding criteria was based on the Emissions Reduction Pathway data (the most relevant strategy when the Fund was established). Study data showed that Transport and Buildings are the two biggest sources of local carbon emissions, so projects that make carbon reductions in these areas are given priority. Projects to increase awareness and knowledge of climate change and the need to reduce our carbon footprint are also considered. In the future, we will link funding priorities to our Climate Action Plan.

Timeline

The timeline for the project is as follows:

- January 2019 – Calderdale declares a climate emergency
- February 2020 – Amendment made to the budget proposal to include Climate Fund
- January 2021 - Proposals for spend and governance for Climate Fund agreed at Cabinet
- July 2021 – Round one of the Climate Fund launched
- November 2021 – Round one funding awarded
- May 2022 – Round two of the Climate Fund launched
- July 2022 – Round two funding awarded
- May 2023 – Third (and final) round of Climate Fund launched

Stakeholders

Funding for the Climate Fund was provided by Calderdale Council and CFFC. CFFC has also succeeded in attracting donations from other parties. Many of these donations are ongoing monthly/annual standing order commitments.

We chose to partner with CFFC on this scheme as they support charities and voluntary groups across Calderdale, working alongside these groups to address inequalities and create opportunities for those who need them the most. CFFC has distributed grants since 1991, enabling positive change in the lives of thousands of people in our communities. They distribute grants and loans and use their specialist knowledge to help community projects thrive, so they can make an even greater impact. They are responsible for advertising the fund, as well as due diligence, grant offers and monitoring.

Within Calderdale Council, officers from the Climate Team provide technical assessment comments on applications. Communications Officers also provide support publicising the Fund, with wraparound support to show how it is contributing to the delivery of our Climate Action Plan and benefiting local communities.

Impact

We estimate that the Climate Fund could deliver 2,000 tonnes of carbon savings over the project's lifetime. We ask applicants to measure the carbon savings made by the projects and their own organisation's carbon footprint and report this. We have found that it is the first time many groups have calculated their carbon footprint. Groups have also been conducting audits of their own community buildings using a national best practice template.

To date, 16 delivery projects have been funded, with 15 of these projects estimating their CO₂ savings. The 15 quantified projects will deliver a cumulative 316.85 tonnes of CO₂e annually. This will deliver an estimated saving of 6,337 tonnes over the next 20 years.

Two engagement projects and four feasibility studies have been funded to date.

Along with tackling the climate emergency, these projects will improve community assets, support community wealth building, and raise awareness of the need for further positive climate action.

Specific projects that have been funded include:

Hour Car

Hour Car is a car share scheme that has operated in the Upper Calder Valley for 18 years. This members' co-operative will use the grant to buy a new electric vehicle for its fleet, with a rapid charging facility to meet members' needs. The plan is to locate the electric vehicle in the heart of Todmorden town centre, giving local people easy access to community car sharing which is good for the environment.



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ELECTRIC VEHICLE
ONLY
FREE parking whilst charging
Maximum stay 1 hour
A Penalty Charge Notice may
be issued if the bay is used
other than the designated
purpose

Hope Baptist Church, Hebden Bridge

The church has taken a number of steps to improve energy efficiency, including restoring the Victorian self-closing door hinges, removing the huge cast iron radiators, installing app-controlled heating systems and introducing a high-tech ventilation/heat recovery system.



Lessons learned

The project wasn't possible without the full buy-in from the Council and the Foundation.

The Foundation was able to provide £50,000 of match funding as a contribution to the Climate Emergency Grants pot. The Foundation also ringfenced £500,000 of its endowment to guarantee annual income after the main programme funding ceases.

The Foundation launched an online giving platform at www.cffc.co.uk and contact was made with foundation donors and supporters face-to-face and via social media. This activity led to several donations which were added to the Climate Emergency Fund to support more grants.

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To date, £427,898 of funding has been awarded to community groups across Calderdale.

The project is predominantly funded by Calderdale Council and CFFC:

- £500,000 Council funding
- £500,000 CFFC endowment funds and £50,000 of match funding over two years (to make the programme cost neutral for delivery)
- CFFC has also succeeded in attracting £22,710 in immediate donations from other parties. Many of these donations are ongoing monthly/annual standing order commitments

Next steps

Further funding is available in Round 3 of the Climate Fund. This is set to launch in May 2023 following the local elections. Options for how we can continue this scheme, or similar schemes, in the future are currently being scoped out.

Links, contacts and credits

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