Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

Introduction

Developing the vision, aims, and themes, and the priority actions of your plan, will involve close collaboration and co-design with both internal and external stakeholders (see the 'Developing Your Plan' guidance document).

Given the cross-cutting nature of these actions, it is important that there is buy-in and responsibility for all departments of the organisation. While there may be an officer or a small team whose job it is to co-ordinate and keep track of actions, ultimate responsibility should not lie within this team. Instead, we recommend that there should be a senior governance team, in the form of an existing or newly created steering group, that includes representation from all relevant departments and the organisation leadership. If a pre-existing group is suitable, oversight of this process can be integrated, to make gaining buy-in as straightforward as possible.

Members of this steering group could then each be responsible for bringing issues to further working groups or committees as needed, according to each theme or area of priority in the Climate Action Plan. Regular public progress reports are good practice and should be the responsibility of the lead officer. Given the unique composition of each organisation's governance structures, ultimately you know what will work best for your organisation.

Organisations may choose to use a consulting firm or other third party to assist them in developing the Plan, or parts of it. Their involvement and processes need to be clearly referenced so that the work is understandable and replicable in future.

The rest of this document will explain the workshops that are required to complete step three, as well as further engagement tips for developing draft sections of your plan, and a note on the importance of mapping governance.

1. Meetings and Workshops for Step 3

Step 3 will require a significant amount of engagement with internal and, depending on the level of co-development you are aiming for, external stakeholders. To complete this step, you will need to develop 2 pieces of work, which will ultimately form the basis of your climate action plan. However, these can be created to cover both cycles:

1. A draft *Vision, Aims, and Themes* (Adaptation and Mitigation)
2. A draft *Action Plan* (Adaptation and Mitigation)

You can see our guidance documents for developing these drafts in **Step 3 of Net Zero NI** and **NI Adapts**. We have also provided a draft meeting agenda for a workshop below. However, you may prefer to split these out into separate meetings, or a series of 1-1 conversations.

Step 3 only requires that you draft the information above, but Step 4 is the place where some of the more challenging conversations can take place, where signoff is finalised with senior staff and resource allocated. For this reason, use this step as an opportunity to generate a wide range of ideas which can then be refined in the next step.

1a. Step 3 Draft Meeting Agenda

- See here for a Draft Meeting Agenda covering Step 3 for both mitigation and adaptation

2. Engaging on Development and Prioritisation of Actions

See our 'Action Plan and Monitoring Framework Guide' for full details

2a. Action Ownership

Your priority actions should emerge naturally from the vision, aims and themes you have set out. Depending on resource, a sub-group within your cross-functional climate team could be established and given ownership of action planning, incorporating members of relevant departments such as sustainability, operations, estates, and finance.

2b. Mapping Governance

Your governance structure will be unique to your organisation but should be mapped in full and included within the body of the plan, to account for all areas of responsibility in a transparent manner as Islington have done in the example below. This can help with action planning by establishing clear lines of responsibility.

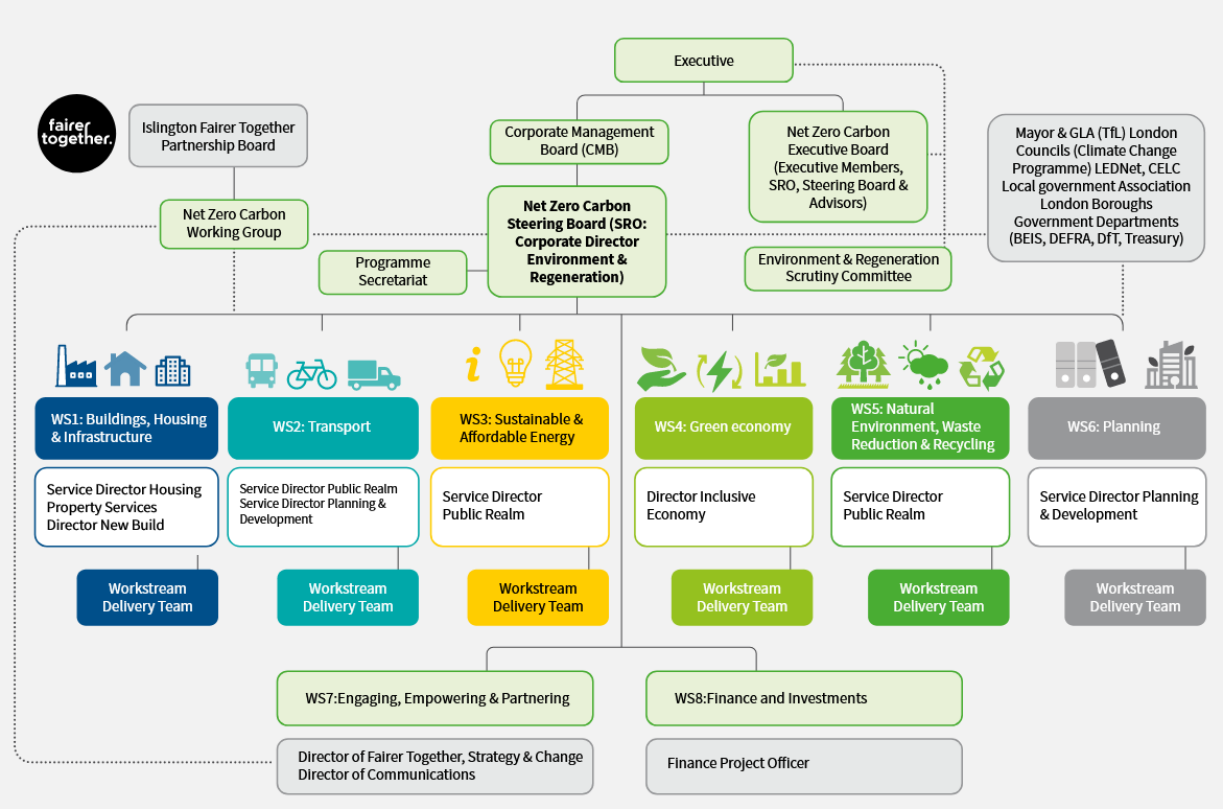

Figure 1: Islington Council - Governance Map[1]

2c. Engaging Communities

The EU's Stakeholder Engagement for Adaptation manual[2] makes some suggestions about how you can engage communities. The extent to which you incorporate these ideas into your plan is up to you. However, it may be worth trying to 'piggy-back' and work with services in your organisation, or local organisations already in the community, to see if you can integrate some of these actions into existing meetings, to avoid stakeholder fatigue.

Going further than the manual, you might want to consider how climate risks interact with other socio-economic issues, and that those most vulnerable may be those least able to voice their concerns and interact with you (the elderly, sick, deprived communities, etc.). This means you may have to undertake targeted engagement activities if you wish to ensure no one in your community is left behind or forgotten about. Ways in which you can do this include:

- **Establishing collaborative partnerships and securing commitments from different sectors within the community:** Sectors to involve include voluntary, educational, health, faith organisations, businesses (large and SME) and anchor institutions. These relationships can take a variety of forms.

- **Having an up-to-date Climate Emergency section of the local authority website that is signposted from the homepage:**
  A good Climate Emergency section will:
  - Contain the Plan, supporting document and a link to the minutes of the meeting where it was approved.
  - Outline what actions are being taken and regularly update on progress.
  - Demonstrate how people can get involved, using case studies where possible, and contain clear contact information for those that wish to give feedback.
  - Provide resources on how people can reduce their own carbon and ecological footprint.
  - Provide information about costing, budgeting and funding.

References

1. Islington Council. 2020. *Vision 2030: Building A Net Zero Carbon Islington By 2030*. https://www.islington.gov.uk/~/media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/energyservices/businessplanning/strategies/20202021/20201209vision2030islingtonzerocarbonstrategy1.pdf
2. Climate ADAPTS. 2023. *Stakeholder and Citizen Engagement in Climate Adaptation: A DIY Manual*. https://ricardo.ent.box.com/s/f1vxye2bjdkjre7f1h2xnhwhlidlc6t8