



Subject:	Climate Action Pledge - BITC
Date:	14 September 2023
Reporting Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner
Contact Officers:	Richard McLernon, Climate Programme Manager City

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	This report will update Members on the Business in the Community (BITC) Climate Pledge and the opportunity for Belfast City Council to join the initiative.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note the opportunity for Belfast City Council to join the Business in the Community (BITC) Climate Pledge.

	<p>II. Note that a prerequisite of signing the pledge is the agreement of a Council target year for the reduction of GHG gases, and incorporation of relevant projects into the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan, which would be followed by a public pledge to communicate this widely.</p> <p>III. Give their approval for the Council to sign up to the BITC Climate Pledge when the above prerequisite has been achieved.</p> <p>IV. Note that Belfast City Council manages a separate Belfast Business Promise which contains a pledge, criteria and workstream dedicated to Climate. Belfast City Council is currently working through the Belfast Business Promise accreditation process.</p>
3.0	Main report
3.1	Background
3.2	Business in the Community Climate Action Pledge
3.3	Business in the Community established the Climate Pledge to encourage and support businesses to reach net zero, building momentum across a range of organisations across Northern Ireland.
3.4	Signatory organisations commit to reduce their absolute scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions by either 30% or 50% by 2030; and to work towards measuring and reporting their scope 3 GHG emissions. The chosen base year must be 2015 or thereafter. Members will be aware that a Belfast City target of 80% reduction by 2030 has been approved with 100% reduction to be achieved by 2050. Work is also underway with the procurement team to measure the Council's scope 3 emissions. Members should note that the achievement of the targets set out above would be subject to Council agreeing a net zero target and on including the relevant projects / actions within the corporate plan and medium-term financial plan.
3.5	<p>In addition, through the campaign Business in the Community supports signatories to achieve the targets of the Pledge by providing:</p> <p>i. A Climate Action Pledge FAQ factsheet that helps the organisation to sign up to the Climate Action Pledge, use the Climate Action Pledge Reporting Platform, and meet the requirements of the commitment.</p>

- ii. Free access for Pledge signatories to calculate and measure emissions on the Pledge Reporting Platform.
- iii. Bespoke training, e-learning and education opportunities for senior management and staff.
- iv. Support with development and evaluation of strategies and action plans through workshops.
- v. Sector-focused Climate Action Toolkits.
Signposting to useful resources from Business in the Community and external organisations
- vi. Support with measurement, reporting and communicating progress to key stakeholders.
- vii. Links to carbon offsetting opportunities at a local level.
- viii. Best practice examples and case studies.
- ix. Networking and profiling opportunities through BITC communication channels and events.

3.6

87 companies have signed up to the BITC Climate Pledge to date, including key city partners such as NIHE, Translink, Belfast Harbour and NI Water.

3.7

Belfast Business Promise

3.8

Members will be aware of the Belfast Business Promise, which is an initiative led by Belfast City Council is a key commitment in the Council's Inclusive Growth strategy with the aim of creating a more inclusive city. As such, it is also included as a key action in the refreshed Belfast Agenda. Members will be aware that a cross council team, led by the Strategy, Policy and Partnership in partnership with Economic Development, has been progressing the development of the Belfast Business Promise, alongside an external business working group and the council's Social Policy Working Group (SPWG).

3.9

The Belfast Business Promise has been co-developed with businesses and has eight pledges designed to create a more inclusive and sustainable city. As part of the development of the accreditation system, an accreditation mapping exercise has been completed so that the Belfast Business Promise recognises the accreditation standards that businesses may already have achieved. 22 organisations, including the Council, Translink, QUB, UU, BT, SENI and Equality Commission have signed up to the pilot phase to refine the Charter and delivery model for full roll-out later this year.

3.10

As an organisation, the Council has also signed-up to the Belfast Business Promise demonstrating leadership and commitment to working with employers to deliver on the ambition of creating an inclusive and sustainable city. Detailed internal discussions have been ongoing with key officers and professions to assess the Council's position in relation to meeting the pledges and the subsequent action planning to ensure continuous improvement. The first assessment is currently in progress, with the initial feedback to be reported to the next meeting of the Social Policy Working Group in September.

3.11

Pledge 8 of the Belfast Business Promise – Protect our Environment, is a commitment to 'Work together to tackle the global challenge of climate change and protect our environment for future generations'. All pledges are set out in the diagram below.



3.12

Officers from the Belfast City Council Climate Team have liaised with the Belfast Business Promise team to support the development of the criteria under pledge 8, to support and assess businesses who apply, and to support the process of Belfast City Council going through the accreditation process itself.

4.0	Financial & Resource Implications
4.1	There are no financial or resource implications at present.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications
5.1	There are no direct equality and good relations implications.
6.0	Appendices
6.1	None.