POLICY AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINITY PANEL

22 October 2019

CABINET
24 October 2019

COUNCIL
7 November 2019

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Report of the Strategic Lead for Environment

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Policy & Performance Scrutiny Panel:

(1) note the contents of this report and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

It is recommended that Cabinet:

(2) note the content of this report and make recommendations to Council as appropriate

It is recommended that Council:

(3) Approve the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency Strategy
(4) Approve the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency Action Plan

Summary

On the 18 July 2019 the Council unanimously declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. The approved motion was as follows:

Eastleigh Borough Council has a long history of tackling climate change; throughout the life of its current Climate Change Strategy the Council has installed thousands of kWh of renewable energy, supported residents and community groups to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, lobbied Government and worked with partners to improve the resilience of the Borough.
Council reaffirms its existing commitment by joining other local authorities and institutions in declaring a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agrees to:

a) put in place measures to ensure that the Council’s own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025,

b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030,

c) ensure that the Council’s procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of the primary considerations,

d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council,

e) establish a cross-party working group to develop a plan for how the Borough of Eastleigh could achieve carbon neutrality by 2030,
   i. to be chaired by the Cabinet Lead for the Environment and to include representatives from within the local community and businesses,
   ii. to report to Council within six months with a new Climate Change Strategy alongside immediate actions the Council will take to address this emergency,
   iii. to be followed by a detailed Action Plan to be developed to include reporting requirements and assessment of the associated resource implications; and

f) include all of the recommendations above in a revised Climate Change Strategy to be completed and approved by Council in 2019/20.

This report sets out progress to date, baseline assessment and the strategy that the Council is taking to meet these targets.

Statutory Powers

Local Government Act 2001

Strategic Implications

1. Climate change and negative environmental impacts are the biggest challenge facing the long-term future of residents and businesses of Eastleigh. There is a direct link to all areas of the Corporate Plan. The achievement of the Action Plan appended to this report will directly support the Council’s environmental objectives such as tackling congestion and creating an excellent environment for all. Responding to the Climate Emergency is critical to secure the long-term health and wellbeing for residents and the local economy.

Introduction

2. Climate change is widely considered to be the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century. In response to the October 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report stating that there was less than 12 years to respond to this emergency a cross-party motion was unanimously agreed at the 18 July 2019 Full Council to address the issue locally.
3. The declaration sets out the Council’s aim to be carbon neutral by 2025 and to support communities and businesses across the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

4. This report sets out progress to date, the Council’s Strategy for responding to the Climate and Environmental Emergency alongside an interim action plan.

**Progress to date**

5. The Borough Council has a long history of tackling climate change and was awarded Beacon Status for its efforts in 2008. Building from this, over the last decade, the Council has installed thousands of kWh of renewable energy, generating over 300kWh per year, supported residents and community groups to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, lobbied Government and worked with partners to improve the resilience of the Borough. During this time it has also supported hundreds of households to improve the efficiency of their homes and continued public engagement and with schools. The Council’s operational emissions have reduced by over 35% since 2008 and are ahead of the Government’s 2020 target.

6. The Council’s 2011-2020 Climate Change Strategy expires at the end of December 2019; this new strategy builds upon the work over the last decade, taking into account new scientific information, policy developments and new technology to further respond to what has now become an emergency.

7. Since the unanimously approved Council motion, the cross party working Climate Change and Environmental Emergency Working Group (CCEEWG) has met five times, agreeing governance arrangements and the approach to be taken in developing a strategy and the approach to be taken by the Council. The terms of reference for the Group have been included within amendments to the Constitution elsewhere on the 7 November 2019 Council agenda.

8. The Strategy has been drafted by the CCEEWG and is appended to this report for approval by councillors.

9. An initial Action Plan has been developed by CCEEWG which will be refined and developed over the period to 2030 to ensure carbon neutrality targets are achieved.

10. One of the elements of the Council motion was to ensure that consideration is given to climate and environmental issues during decision making. All committee reports will in future contain a section titled “Climate Change and the Environment Implications”. This will ensure that impacts on the environment are embedded within the way the Council works and takes decisions. A training programme is under development for both staff and councillors to ensure that this is effective and will be fully implemented by April 2020.
11. An internal working group has been setup, with staff from across all service areas. This has led a wide range of actions being put forward to respond to the emergency and the level of engagement is encouraging.

12. Detailed work has been carried out to assess the baseline level of emissions, both from Council operations and borough wide. This is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 15 – 16.

13. The process of engaging with stakeholders, including residents and businesses, has begun, with further engagement planned throughout the term of the Strategy. This includes business engagement events and also a resident survey.

14. A communications plan has been drafted to ensure that the Action Plan can be delivered and communicated to all and that the messaging will ensure maximum results for the achievement of the Strategy aims.

**Baseline**

15. The Council has a good record of tracking its own scope 1 & 2 emissions over several years and has been doing so as part of the previous climate change strategy and emission reduction targets. The emissions stands at 1.8 ktCO2e for 2017/18 (latest compiled data). Whilst this data is comprehensive it does not include the emissions from all areas of the Council’s activity and in particular the Council’s procurement activity. An analysis of procurement activity has suggested that there is approximately a further 1.1 ktCO2e of emissions although this calculation is not as reliable. In order to provide a baseline for the measurement of success it is proposed that the Council sets the operational target for 2025 to reduce or offset emissions by 2.9 ktCO2e.

16. The Government produce area based CO2 emissions data. These figures include a broad range of data with the notable exceptions of aviation, shipping, military transport and lifestyle emissions. To ensure that a prudent approach is taken, the Council has carried out an assessment of lifestyle and airport emissions and these are included within the area target. This assessment has found that in order to reach Net Zero emissions by 2030 there would need to be a borough wide reduction from 1046.1ktCO2e. This is based on 619.7ktCO2e Area, 378.4ktCO2e Lifestyle and 48ktCO2e Airport. Further detail as to how this data has been calculated can be found in appendix 4.

**Key Principles**

17. The following are the core principles that set out the Council’s approach to the climate change and Environmental strategy:

(a) All Council decisions will take into account the potential impact on climate change and the environment to achieve congruence with this strategy.
(b) The Council needs to take a strong approach to communications to increase awareness of the level of emergency;

(c) Wherever possible changes should be front loaded, the earlier reductions are made the better to meet global targets;

(d) As a last resort there will need to be offsetting to reach net zero emissions, local approaches which lead to local environmental improvements will be prioritised;

(e) There is a need to take the precautionary principle approach to ensure the Council does not do things that could have future negative consequences;

(f) Adaptation responses need to prioritise natural solutions first; such as trees for shading as opposed to physical structures;

(g) Whilst the upfront cost can be higher than “business as usual”, it is cheaper than the longer term costs of adapting at a later date.

**Engagement**

18. One of the core principles of the Strategy is that there needs to be “collective responsibility” for the Council, staff, residents and businesses to respond to the emergency. Effective engagement is critical to ensure that stakeholders are engaged in the development of the strategy and the delivery of the action plan.

19. Since the declaration of an emergency, the Council has engaged with a wide range of residents, staff, businesses and key stakeholders. Further engagement is planned over the coming months, both to further develop a more detailed action plan and to support residents and businesses to respond to the emergency. The engagement to date includes:

   (a) Residents survey, with over 320 responses from the public setting out a range of actions that they would like to see the Council carry out or provide

   (b) Business engagement: The Council facilitated a multi-local authority business engagement workshop at the Hilton Ageas, engaging with hundreds of business leaders.

   (c) Key stakeholders: The Council has run two key stakeholder events, the first with a wide range of representatives from the community, lobby groups and businesses. The second event focused on ecology and included representatives from key partners such as Natural England, Environment Agency, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

20. More than a third of area based emissions relate to residents “lifestyle” activities, therefore a critical element of the plan will be to develop detailed behavioural change programme. Consideration is being made as to whether
the Council should facilitate sessions such as ‘citizens’ assemblies’ to enable co-design of community responses.

**Next Steps**

21. The Council has committed to producing a more detailed action plan by the end of March 2020. Further engagement with stakeholders will be carried out, alongside detailed business case development to ensure increase clarity over action delivery.

22. The working group will continue to meet regularly to oversee the development of the detailed action plan. Once the action plan has been agreed, the working group will meet quarterly from March 2020 to oversee delivery of the actions.

**Financial Implications**

23. The activities set out in this report are either being carried out through existing allocated resources or require further investigation before funding is to be allocated.

24. It is clear that there will need to be significant investment for the Council to meet its operational Carbon Neutral target and put actions in place to support the borough towards reaching neutrality by 2030. As the activities in the action plan are further developed detailed businesses cases, including sources of funding will need to be developed too.

**Risk Assessment**

25. There are significant risks should the Council fail to mitigate climate change and ensure that the residents, businesses and the natural environment are able to adapt to the future climate.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

26. The Equality Act is relevant to the decision in this report as the decision relates to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations between different people in the following ways: The various impacts and responses to climate change are likely to disproportionately impact on people with protected characteristics.

27. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out, attached as an appendix to the report. In summary the EqIA shows that care will be needed to ensure that actions to mitigate climate change do not lead to discrimination and that opportunities to reduce existing inequality are maximised. As the action plan is further developed there will need to be further engagement with key stakeholders and representatives of protected groups to ensure that actions are compliant and where possible reduce existing inequality.
28. Actions linked to the review of procurement policy and increased training will support the Council’s efforts to eliminate modern slavery. All activities considered in the action plan will need to take Modern Slavery into account.

29. Expanding upon the core equality considerations, this report sets out an approach for the Council to respond to the challenge of climate and environmental degradation to support the wellbeing of future generations.

**Climate Change and the Environment Implications**

30. Climate Change and the environment is relevant to the decision in this report as the decision relates to activities that release Greenhouse Gases, resilience to environmental impacts or impacting on ecology in the following ways: The report is setting out the Council’s Strategy for reducing its contribution to climate change and negative environmental issues, providing a programme of activity to Carbon Neutrality from Council and a framework for borough wide activity. A Sustainable Development Goals Impact Assessment (SDGIA) has been carried out, attached as an appendix to the report. In summary the SDGIA shows that the strategy and action plan is likely to have a positive impact across 16 of the 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Conclusion**

31. The Climate and Environmental Emergency presents significant risk to residents and businesses, this report recommends a Strategy and Action Plan that will enable the Council to respond effectively to this emergency.

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Appendices Attached: Seven:

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D**

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

* List Background Papers or state None.