

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

19 June 2020

CABINET

25 June 2020

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE

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) approve the Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan;**
- (3) note the 2019/20 Greenhouse Gas Report and the positive steps taken over the previous 12 months.**

Summary

On 7 November 2019 the Council approved a Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan, in response to the Emergency declaration on the 18 July 2019. This report sets out progress to date alongside building upon the interim plan to set out a more detailed action plan.

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.

Statutory Powers

Local Government Act 2001

Strategic Implications

1. Climate breakdown 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 at Appendix A 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. The climate breakdown 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 alongside building upon the interim plan to set out a more detailed 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.
6. The initial Action Plan has been further refined since the interim plan was agreed on the 7 November to ensure carbon neutrality targets are achieved.
7. An internal staff 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.
8. The Council approved the creation of two new staff posts. A Climate Change Manager post to coordinate the climate change and environmental emergency agenda which is now out to advert. A further post to look at green energy for the Council will be appointed to in the autumn.

9. 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 a resident survey.
10. 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.

Update on Baseline

11. 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 stand at 1.8 ktCO₂e for 2019/20 (latest compiled data). Whilst there is a wealth of data the previous reporting system did not include the emissions from all areas of the Council's activity and in particular the Council's procurement activity. Initial analysis of procurement activity for 2018/19 suggested that there is approximately a further 1.1 ktCO₂e of emissions although this calculation is an estimation. In order to provide a baseline for the measurement of success it was agreed in November 2019 that the Council sets the operational target for 2025 to reduce or offset emissions from 2.9 ktCO₂e to zero.
12. The Government produces 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. Data for 2019/20 will not be published until later this year.

Annual Greenhouse Gas Update

13. Every year the Council compiles an annual Greenhouse Gas Report which provides a complete picture of the Council's climate performance. This year the report is quite different from previous years as it includes all staff travel (including commuting to work), procurement and positive carbon emissions through our land use. The report is attached at Appendix B.
14. The report covering the period of 2019/20 is the first produced since the July 2019 Climate and Environmental Emergency Declaration and associated Strategy and Action Plan published in November 2019. The new strategy includes a commitment for the Council to move to an industry leading comprehensive approach to Greenhouse Gas Reporting.
15. Based on the old methodology the Council has continued to reduce emissions primarily due to reductions in electricity usage. The new methodology, which looks to include other areas of emission such as procurement, indicates an increase in Council emissions from 2018/19. This predominately relates to a higher level of construction spend than in the previous year and will continue to be monitored to ensure a downward trend.

Action Plan

16. The Council committed to producing a more detailed action plan by the end of March 2020 however with the Covid pandemic priorities within the staff team this has meant that it has been delayed until this committee.
17. Regular meetings have been held to oversee the development of the detailed action plan and a number of areas have progressed. Significantly, the action plan has been expanded to include an area looking at the Council's capital projects including housing delivery which will help to ensure the Borough can achieve the 2030 target by delivering schemes that uphold the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency principles.
18. The action plan is divided into subject areas, although there is inevitably overlap. The key areas being planned to tackle the issue are summarised below with the detail contained within the Action Plan at Appendix A.
 - **Pollution:** Following the adoption of the Air Quality Strategy, officers have begun to develop a broader pollution strategy which later in the year will set out the response to pollution issues being encountered within the Borough.
 - **Fleet:** The Council has continued to roll out fleet improvements with further efficiencies planned over the next 12 months and a desire to move to electric vehicles.
 - **Ecology:** There are many actions within the Ecology theme. These include the development of the tree planting scheme which is aiming for launch in the autumn.
 - **Training:** A training programme has been developed to support staff and councillors to take decisions that support the response to the climate emergency. The Council is the first Local Authority to partner with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment to enable it to begin to deliver industry leading training in house.
 - **Procurement:** A new procurement officer has recently been employed by the Council, they have started to review procurement policies, guidance, training and will be setting out a programme to review the Council's spend which will be monitored through the Procurement Executive Group.
 - **Housing:** In addition to updates to the existing workstreams, a new set of activities around Housing has been added to the action plan. The Housing Programme will include activities around zero carbon development and biodiversity net gain.
 - **Nutrient Budgeting:** This issue is already being tackled with an offsetting scheme approved by Cabinet earlier in the year. This will be expanded with work being carried out to identify land for further long term offsetting opportunities.

19. Once the more detailed action plan appended to this report has been approved, the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency Action Board will meet every 6 weeks to oversee delivery of the actions. This Board mirrors the other Project Boards which the Council has and will be attended by Councillor Kyrle as the Environment Portfolio Leader.
20. Once agreed, the action plan will be discussed at each LAC team meeting so that local priorities can influence where appropriate.

Financial Implications

21. Most of the activities set out in the action plan are either being carried out through existing allocated resources or require further investigation before funding is to be allocated. Where additional resource is required a business case will be drawn up and approval obtained before commencement.
22. 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

23. 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

24. 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.
25. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to support the Climate and Environmental Programme in November and this has been used to refine the approach set out. 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
26. 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.

27. Expanding upon the core equality considerations, this report further refines the 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

28. 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 further refining 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.

Conclusion

29. The Climate and Environmental Emergency presents significant risk to residents and businesses. This report recommends a more detailed Action Plan that will enable the Council to respond effectively to this emergency.

JASON LIGHT
STRATEGIC PLANNING LEAD FOR ENVIRONMENT

Date: 25 May 2020
Contact Officer: Jason Light
Tel No: 023 8068 8077
e-mail: jason.light@eastleigh.gov.uk
Appendices: 2 - Detailed action plan
Annual GHG update

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.