

REPORT TITLE: DECLARATION OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY

5 JUNE 2019

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER : CLLR LYNDA MURPHY

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The report recommends the declaration of a Climate Emergency and sets out a commitment for making Winchester City Council “carbon neutral” by 2024 and the District by 2030. The Appendix to this report is a paper drafted by Cllr Lynda Murphy, the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, which sets out the main effects of climate change, its effect on natural and human systems and how it can be addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet

1. Declare a ‘Climate Emergency’;
2. Commit to an aim of making the activities of Winchester City Council carbon neutral by 2024, and the district of Winchester carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol). Publish a report within six months setting out the immediate actions the Council will take to address this emergency and a plan to measure annual district progress towards meeting the 2030 target.
3. Work with partners across the district to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans and drawing on local and global best practice.
4. Support the lobbying of Government in relation to the Climate Emergency and providing the additional powers and resources needed to meet the 2030 target.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

- 1.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the Council Strategy priority to improve the quality of the District's environment.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The financial implications of the additional measures required to work towards further reductions in carbon emissions will need to be assessed and further details will be included in the report to be brought back to Cabinet later this year. These will form an important part of the Medium Term Financial Planning process in order to ensure that proposals are prioritised and are financially sustainable in the overall budget context.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Local authorities in the UK have a statutory duty to manage local air quality under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 from which the Local Air Quality Management process derives. Following this Act, a National Air Quality Strategy was published in 1997 (last updated in January 2019) and the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 set objectives for several pollutants.
- 3.2 The regulations place a legal obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where they are not, the local authority must then declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.
- 3.3 In 2008 the European legislation (Directive 2008/50/EC) detailed the pollutants that occur in ambient air which have the potential to impact on human health. The Directive sets concentration values for each pollutant and a date by which the limit values should be achieved. Failure to meet the limit values by the deadlines can result in fines being levied against an EU member state by the European Commission. The dates for compliance with limit values in the Air Quality Directive, was extended for NO<sub>2</sub>, to January 2015. A European Supreme Court ruling on the Government's breach of NO<sub>2</sub> limits required work on a comprehensive plan to meet pollution limits as soon as possible. The Department of the Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) submitted an Air Quality Action Plan to the European Commission for their assessment at the end of 2015. In the local context, the City Centre has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area and the Council has sought to address this by adopting its Air Quality Management Plan, which sets out a number of core and complimentary measures designed to improve air quality. The Council also submits to Government an annual screening report which includes monitoring at a number of other locations across the district.

#### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has recently appointed a Sustainability Officer who will coordinate work across the Council and with partners working through a project team. .

#### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Asset Management Strategy, Car Park Major Works programme, City of Winchester Movement Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan already include a range of measures and plans which will reduce carbon emissions over time. These action plans will require review in the light of the declaration of a Climate Change Emergency

#### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The existing Carbon Reduction programme and initiatives have been developed with the close support of WinACC. Declaration of a Climate Change Emergency will provide opportunity to further engage partners to deliver this ambitious target across the district. It will be necessary to consult with a wide range of partners and other agencies in developing plans and proposals for meeting the revised targets.
- 6.2 There is a live Winchester Friends of the Earth petition asking the Council to declare a Climate Change Emergency ([Link to petition](#)) with over 350 signatures (as at 24 May 2019).

#### 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 These are set out in the Appendix to this report.

#### 8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 Any proposed new or revised policies will require a review of the relevant impact assessments in accordance with the statutory requirements which include the Equalities Act 2010.
- 8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) involves assessing the impact of new or revised policies, practices or services against the requirements of the public sector equality duty and requires all public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. It helps to ensure the needs of people are taken into account during the development and implementation of a new policy or service or when a change is made to a current policy or service.

#### 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None at this stage

## 10 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 The table below sets out the intended approach to manage risk, mitigation and opportunities.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<i>Property Existing Asset Management Strategy not sufficient to meet new targets</i>	Strategy to be reviewed and updated	
<i>Timescales Targets very ambitious</i>	Action plan to be prepared for December 2019	
<i>Project capacity house resource limited</i>	Cross Council officer group to be established  Partner group to be established	External support and expertise exists to support this work
<i>Financial / VfM Significant investment required to meet targets</i>	Action plan to be prepared for December 2019 in order to integrate into the budget process	
<i>Reputation Risk of not meeting target</i>	Action plan to be prepared for December 2019. Monitor and review progress of the adopted plan.	Ambitious target will help galvanise efforts of others

## 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 **Declaring a “Climate Emergency”** A Climate Emergency declaration issued by a council can be a powerful catalyst for action if paired with a clear action plan. Since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report in October 2018 the Climate Emergency movement has emerged; originating in Australia and shifting to the UK in November 2018 when Bristol City Council became the first UK local authority to declare a Climate Emergency. Since then, over 70 local authorities have passed Climate Emergency declarations. and set targets to become carbon neutral. The most commonly set date is 2030, with others setting targets for dates such as 2028, 2038 and 2050. The

Committee on Climate Change, advisors to the central Government has revised the UK's target to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

- 11.2 There is no single definition of what declaring a climate emergency means. It is protocol to declare an emergency “when there is a life-threatening situation.”
- 11.3 Many are defining a “climate emergency” as becoming carbon neutral (given the results of the IPCC report) within 12 years to stop global temperatures rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- 11.4 Declarations mean the Council notes that:
- a) Climate change provides significant risk to the Council
  - b) Climate change provides significant risk to the community and biodiversity of the region
- 11.5 A Climate Emergency declaration and a carbon neutrality target date needs to be accompanied by a clear action plan that is supported by and embedded in the local authority as a whole.

## 12 **The New Targets**

- 12.1 The report seeks approval to declare a Climate Emergency and set very ambitious targets for the activities of the Council to be “Carbon Neutral” by 2024 and the district by 2030. It is not possible at this stage to set out how those targets could be achieved and a further report on this issue will be prepared for consideration in December 2019. Paragraphs 14 and 15 below set out the current position regarding carbon emissions locally and provide a clear indication of how challenging the new targets will be.
- 12.2 What is clear is that achieving “carbon neutral” targets by 2024 and 2030 will be reliant on external factors outside the direct control of the Council, including the pace of technological developments and national policy changes and a key emphasis of any such target will be the lobbying for national and international changes.

## 13 **Defining “Carbon Neutral”**

- 13.1 Firstly it will be important to define the term “carbon neutral;” carbon neutral may be achieved through carbon off-setting/trading and purchasing “green tariff” electricity. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) state that “most sectors will need to reduce emissions close to zero without offsetting.” This will dictate the approach adopted in the future and the levels of investment required for the different solutions.
- 13.2 Currently the Council's approach is not to offset but to reduce consumption through for example LED lighting and generation from PV panels. This

approach may have to be reconsidered to achieve the ambitious targets in the report.

#### 14 The City Council's current carbon reduction program

- 14.1 Over the past ten years the Council has reduced its carbon footprint by 31% from 5389 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e to 3700 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e (Figure 1). The increase in carbon emissions in 2014-2015 can be attributed to the inclusion of the sheltered housing schemes within the reporting.

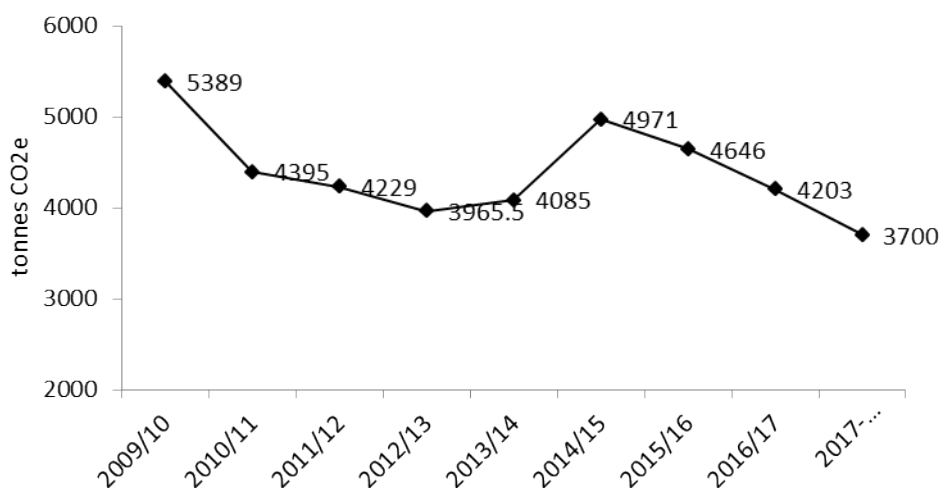


Figure 1. Winchester City Council's reduction in tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e since 2009

- 14.2 It is anticipated that based on current plans and activities, the Council will reduce its emissions by a further 20% based on 2017/2018 figures by 2024
- 14.3 There are a number of early considerations for the council to consider. These are set out below but have not been evaluated for financial viability or deliverability.
- Gas heated buildings to be converted to electric, or their emissions off-set.
  - Emissions from water supply and waste will also need to be off-set.
  - Revising the Asset Management plan for the Council's Housing stock, with an emphasis on renewable technology.
  - Review the Council's transport and subcontracted transport, which currently contributes 23% of the Council's carbon emissions. Vehicles include refuse freighters, Special Maintenance vehicles, vehicles used as part of the landscape ID Verde contract, Park and Ride buses, train and air travel. The 'grey fleet', staff and councillor travel will also have to be considered. It is desirable and recommended that the Council

procures transport contracts with low-emission vehicles for these purposes where possible. However it is not clear whether the technology will be readily accessible by 2024 to cover all these different transport needs and demands. In particular, the procurement of the new waste contract for 2020 is unlikely to achieve such a change. In addition, there is a growing Council estate of both new and old build, sometimes historic buildings, each presenting opportunities and limitations.

**15 Winchester District**

15.1 There has been a 26% reduction in the district’s carbon emissions since 2005 (Figure 2). However, the 2018 report on Carbon Emissions in the district of Winchester (produced for the City Council and Winacc to support the work of the Council’s Low Carbon Board) identified that the per capita total energy in Winchester District exceeded that in five adjacent local authority areas by at least 10%. The greatest emissions (309 kt) came from road transport (excluding motorways). Electricity emissions were next (172 kt) followed by gas (148 kt).<sup>1</sup> This reflects the recent population growth and strong local economy, both of which contribute to carbon emissions.

15.2 Figure 2 displays the carbon emissions of the District. The decline in carbon emissions from electricity is not solely through reduced demand, but largely through renewably generated electricity being uploaded to the electricity grid.

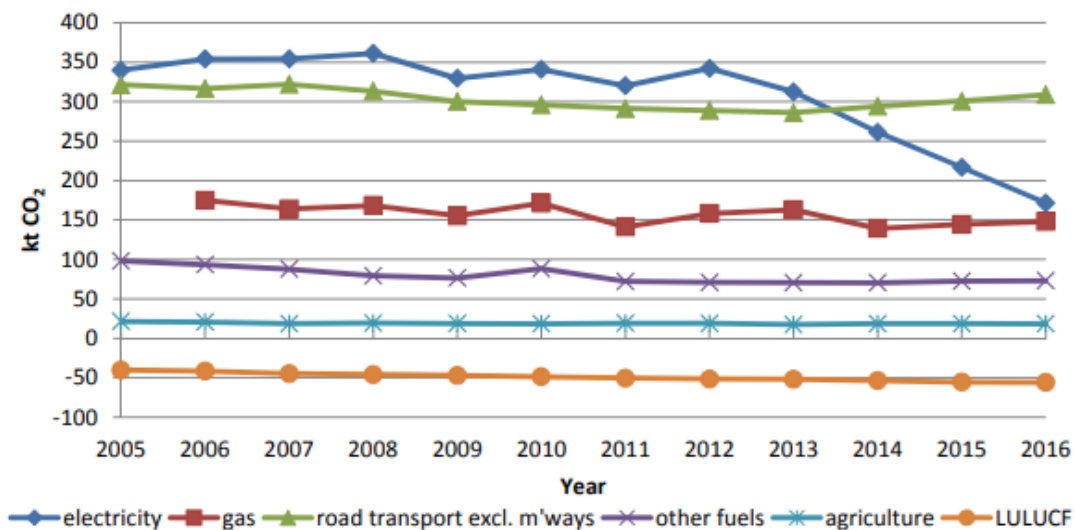


Figure 2. Winchester District carbon emissions from 2005 to 2016 (source of data B. Whitmarsh report)

15.3 The district offers unique set of challenges to becoming carbon neutral and the limitations which these impose must be carefully considered. For example, Winchester city is a conservation area and the South Downs National Park accounts for 40% of the District. Sites for renewable generation are limited although we have a strong record of granting planning permission for solar farms in a number of locations, as are modifications to historic buildings.

Government energy and other policies also impacts directly on the viability of certain renewable technologies. Arguably, however, reducing energy use and transport would pose the most significant opportunities to tackling carbon emissions.

- 15.4 The Council's Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan, the City of Winchester Movement Strategy will play key roles in responding to this challenge. A new car parking strategy will also be drafted in the coming months which again will provide an opportunity to consider traffic related emissions

## 16 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 16.1 The Council has the option to continue with the existing Low Carbon Route Map and "12 steps towards a low carbon council". However, it has been determined that these measures are not a sufficient response to the risks now identified by the most recent information published regarding the impact of climate change. A Climate Emergency declaration is considered to be the most appropriate way to respond to the challenges now being faced by our District and will help to galvanise support for the climate change agenda and set a clear target by which the Council and/or locality will become carbon neutral. It is widely recognised that carbon neutrality is a necessary target if we are to do all we can to keep global warming below 1.5 °C.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Winchester District: Part VIII](#) - 2018

### Previous Committee Reports:

### Other Background Documents:

[Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) in October 2018](#)

### APPENDICES:

Declaration of Climate Emergency – Briefing Paper by Cllr Lynda Murphy, Portfolio Holder for the Environment



**REPORT TITLE: DECLARATION OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY****CABINET - 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019****PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** Councillor Lynda Murphy (Portfolio Holder for Environment)**WARD(S): ALL****PURPOSE**

This report sets out the main effects of climate change, its effect on natural and human systems and how it can be addressed.

**Current position**

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, and its impacts are already being felt around the world. Global temperatures have increased by 1°C from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels are above 400 parts per million. The latest report from the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in October 2018 gave us 12 years to implement changes to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees in order to avoid widespread drought, food scarcity, heat related deaths and loss of biodiversity including insects and vital food crop pollinators.

**Main effects of climate change**

The last three decades have been successively warmer than any decade since 1850 and are likely to have been the warmest 30-year period of the last 1,400 years. Models suggest that the average surface temperature is likely to increase between 0.3°C and 0.7°C further over the period from 2016 to 2035.

Over the 30-year period to 2010, the surface of the oceans has warmed by 0.1°C per decade on average. Absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> has led to acidification of the oceans – the pH of the ocean surface has decreased by 0.1 since the beginning of the industrial era. Oceans will continue to warm and acidify through the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This has implications for coral and marine life, and for all parts of the economy that rely on the ocean for their livelihood.

Since 2002, the land ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica have lost around 400 gigatonnes of ice mass each year. Climate change has been linked to the collapse of Antarctica's Larson A and B ice shelves in 1995 and 2002 respectively. The Arctic Ocean is predicted to become ice free during summer by the middle of this century. Glaciers are shrinking around the world and permafrost is thawing. This increases the risk of further substantial carbon and methane emissions, creating a vicious circle that could accelerate climate change.

Sea levels are rising as a result of melting land ice and higher ocean temperatures. Sea levels rose by around 20cm between 1901-2010. Relative to the year 2000, sea

levels are predicted to rise by 30cm to 130cm by 2100 depending on the level of future emissions.

Some areas in the world are projected to experience higher levels of rainfall, whereas in others rainfall is expected to decrease. Seasons are also changing, with several studies showing spring is arriving earlier across the Northern Hemisphere.

### **Impact of climate change on natural and human systems**

Climate change is expected to increase the risk of extreme events and disasters such as cyclones, floods, droughts and wildfires. Heat waves and extreme weather are likely to become more frequent, intense and/or last longer in some regions of the world.

60% of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles have been lost since 1970. Many more species are at risk of becoming extinct over the 21<sup>st</sup> century through a combination of climate change and other environmental stresses such as pollution and loss of habitat. Climate change is already impacting fragile ecosystems, some of which may never recover, e.g. the major Great Barrier Reef coral bleaching event in 2017 was a result of ocean acidification.

Risks from climate change include disruption to the economy as a result of extreme events and loss of livelihoods from industries like agriculture, fishing and tourism. People already living in poverty are particularly vulnerable to disruption to their livelihoods.

Climate change, coupled with increased demand from growing populations, threatens food security for millions of people. It will affect the availability, access, use and stability of food sources. Unless we adapt to it, climate change will adversely impact global crop yields. This could lead to political instability or violent conflict in some regions.

The impact of climate change on human health includes an increase in injury and deaths from heat waves and extreme events (e.g. fires), under-nutrition and increased risks from changes in infectious diseases. There may be some positive impacts, for example a reduction in cold-related deaths in some areas. However, climate change is expected to have a detrimental impact on human health and mortality overall, with those living in poorer regions most likely to be affected.

Air pollution and climate change are closely related. Many of the sources of both CO<sub>2</sub> and local air pollution are the same, including vehicle exhausts, factory chimneys, energy and heating. Great benefits can be realised if both issues are tackled in an integrated way.

Growing numbers of people are expected to experience water scarcity over the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a result of changes to the quantity and quality of water resources caused by the effect of climate change on hydrological systems. This might contribute to mass population migrations with possible consequences including political instability and/or violent conflict in some regions.

## **How this climate emergency can be addressed**

At present the world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050. In order to reduce the chance of runaway global warming and limit the effects of climate breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO<sub>2</sub>eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible.

Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, and infrastructure to make low carbon living easier. To keep global warming well-below 2°C will require not only a significant reduction in actual emissions but also the large-scale removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Carbon capture technology does exist but financial incentives for developing and enlarging it to the necessary scale are currently weak.

Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption. Winchester City Council has already made some positive progress, but this is not enough. More can and must be done. The Independent Panel on Climate Change in its Oct. 2018 report was very clear that action from all parts of society is necessary and local government has a responsibility to lead the way.

Councils around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and taking action to address this emergency. All levels of government (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of climate breakdown. Local councils that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies.

The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority. Bold local climate action can deliver economic and social benefits in terms of new green jobs, economic savings and market opportunities. It can also improve well-being for Winchester District's residents – for example through reducing fuel poverty and energy bills, encouraging healthy, active travel and improving green spaces and access to nature.

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