

REPORT TITLE: WINCHESTER CARBON NEUTRALITY ACTION PLAN

23 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr. Lucille Thompson, Leader

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report proposes the approval and adoption of the Winchester Carbon Neutrality Action Plan which has been developed following the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in June 2019 which included a commitment to bring an Action Plan for Cabinet's consideration within six months. The report also recommends development of an Implementation Plan to provide for the delivery of the Action Plan.

The work undertaken to create the Action Plan includes collation of currently available carbon emissions data for the Council and the District, several engagement exercises with stakeholders, staff, and residents; and a review of international to local policy on the climate emergency challenges, impacts and responses. This work forms the basis for the scope of the action plan, the priorities identified and the actions set out under these.

The Council Plan 2020-2025 provides the framework for the delivery of the Action Plan by placing carbon neutrality at the heart of all the Council does with the priority of "Tackling the Climate Emergency and creating a greener District"

In order to monitor the impact of the Action Plan towards achieving carbon neutrality, for both the Council and the District, data on carbon emissions will be reported annually, and the delivery of projects quarterly through the Council performance monitoring system. In addition, at least two public open forums will be held to keep residents and interested parties informed and up-to-date, with an annual Climate Conference bringing together a range of agencies and stakeholders to share information and seek to develop collaborations to work in partnership across the district on carbon reduction projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet approve the adoption of the Winchester Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2030.
2. The Strategic Director - Services be given delegated authority to develop a detailed Implementation Plan.
3. Cabinet approve a supplementary budget estimate of £100,000 to be funded from the proposed Transition Reserve for:
 - Re:Fit programme £80,000
 - Project feasibility research with University of Southampton £20,000

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

- 1.1 The Council Plan is currently being reviewed and a draft for public consultation has been published. Central to the new plan is the Climate Emergency as the Council recognises this is one of the main challenges facing Winchester District
- 1.2 As such the Climate Emergency is an overarching priority for the Council and will be at the heart of everything it does.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Council already has a programme of interventions and initiatives that contribute to the achievement of carbon reduction both as an organisation and as a district. These are subject to their own budget requirements and allocations and include:
- The Winchester Movement Strategy
 - Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy
 - Air Quality Strategy
 - Tree Survey and Replacement Programme
 - Investment in energy efficiency measures and up-grades to Council property
- 2.2 In addition, £750,000 funded by prudential borrowing has been set aside in the capital programme (£250,000 per annum in 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22) for projects to be identified that generate sufficient income to cover the cost of borrowing such as renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. In 2019/20, £155,000 of this budget was approved for expenditure on the new leisure centre to increase the solar array and provide grey water recycling provision.
- 2.3 Where projects will provide a sufficient return on investment, it will be possible to finance from prudential borrowing or other sources such as Salix energy efficiency loans or community bonds. Where projects don't make sufficient return other funding sources will be explored (e.g. government grants) and an assessment will need to be made of the cost versus the benefit. As individual projects come forward, they will follow the usual Council approval process including the production of a business case
- 2.4 Feasibility work will be required on new actions identified within the action plan and a comprehensive and a wide ranging programme of engagement and awareness will be undertaken with residents, businesses and other stakeholders to bring about the level of behaviour change required to make the district carbon neutral by 2030. In the Cabinet report on outcome based budget challenge (CAB3178, 23 October 2019), it was proposed that a "Transitional Reserve" could help with a number of issues that require

additional funding, many “one off” in nature, that could be supported from such a reserve, which could include:

Climate Emergency - to fund essential resources required to implement short term actions in the emerging Winchester Carbon Neutrality Action Plan, further detail of which will be reported to Cabinet in December 2019 (£350-500k)

2.5 It is recommended that approval is given to allocate £100,000 from this reserve for

- Re:Fit programme £80,000
- Project feasibility research with University of Southampton £20,000

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The declaration of a climate emergency has no formal legal effect as such, there being no statutory process governing this, but it may represent a material consideration in decision making, create legitimate expectations and trigger the need to act consistently in pursuing actions.
- 3.2 The carbon impact of all decisions should be considered and all Cabinet reports will require an assessment be completed that will calculate positive / negative carbon emissions and the mitigations that will be put in place.
- 3.3 The Council’s Procurement Strategy review will include a requirement to consider environmental and social value within contract assessment. It will prioritise e-procurement for all tenders to reduce paper and energy, and will promote working with SMEs and local suppliers; reducing the need to travel and the distance goods are transported.
- 3.4 Organisations in receipt of Council grant funding will be required to evidence sustainability policies and demonstrate what actions they are taking to reduce the carbon impact of their organisation and the service/project being funded.
- 3.5 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. 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.
- 3.6 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. An Air Quality Action Plan should meet the statutory duty set out under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and measures set out in the National Air Quality Strategy. Implementation of the action plan will be important in delivering the objectives within the Air Quality

Action Plan. Consultation of key groups for the purpose for deciding how to implement the Air Quality Action Plan is important.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 An internal programme management structure has been set up to oversee the delivery of the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan through a programme board supported by the Project Office. Staff resources from across the Council will be needed to mainstream carbon reduction thinking and action into all the Council does. It is proposed that a lead officer be identified for each of the Plan's work streams with responsibility for project initiation, management and delivery reporting.
- 4.2 The Council's Sustainability Officer will be responsible for advising and supporting the development of project actions, together with lead responsibility for delivery of some strategic and transformational projects. The officer will maintain relationships with key partner organisations, and will keep abreast of industry sector and market trends in order to capitalise on any emerging opportunities.
- 4.3 The Energy Manager will be responsible for carbon reporting across the Council's estate and will lead on energy efficiency projects. The officer will also be able to provide appropriate advice on approaches to carbon reduction projects.
- 4.4 It is acknowledged that additional staff resources are likely to be required and this is currently subject to review.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council estate will play a significant role in enabling the Council to achieve carbon neutrality as site energy use contributes 63.5% of current carbon emissions. An early action will be to appoint consultants Local Partnerships to complete a review of the energy saving measures that could be installed in the Council estate with an assessment of pay back to help evaluate return on investment.
- 5.2 Local Partnerships is a joint venture between the LGA, HM Treasury and Welsh Government and is subsidised by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy. Through their Re:Fit programme the Council can access technical expertise and a procurement framework that enables a 'mini competition' to be run to get partners to provide a report on what energy savings and paybacks would be possible. The preferred partner is then selected to produce specifications and carry out the works.
- 5.3 It is recommended that £80,000 budget be allocated to enter into this Re:Fit partnership programme.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 To help develop the Action Plan a number of engagements have taken place together with meetings with partner organisations. In September a round table stakeholder workshop was attended by 16 key organisations and representative groups. The topics debated were vision; governance and implementation. This was followed by a meeting of public sector agencies, including Hampshire County Council and facilitated by Marwell. A Member's briefing session was held in October and the Health & Environment Policy Committee meeting on 9 October also considered the Action Plan.
- 6.2 During Green Week (29 September to 6 October 2019) a series of public engagements were held in local communities where people were asked to vote on the top three actions both the Council and individuals could adopt that would make the greatest impact or change. Engagements were held at Whiteley, Winchester city centre, Wickham, Alresford, Bishops Waltham and at the Cathedral's Green Harvest Festival event. Officers also presented work on the Action Plan to the Sustainable Business Network meeting that same week.
- 6.3 Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC, the local climate action charity) has also reviewed the draft action plan and has provided comments and feedback.
- 6.4 Parish Councils were briefed on the Action Plan at a meeting on 19 November and all staff were briefed over the course of three sessions in November and via the staff forum green group.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The Action Plan covers a number of factors with implications for Council services:
- direct control – housing and commercial estate (new and existing); land management and use; work practices and operations.
 - policy - Local Plan, procurement strategy, financial investment strategy.
 - enablement – support, advice, collaborations and working with others, investments.
 - influence – leadership and lobbying; communications and information sharing; campaigns.
- 7.2 The proposed detailed Implementation Plan will be based on an evaluation and review of the projects outlined that will include the amount of carbon saving and environmental improvement to be achieved by each as an outcome.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the development of the Implementation Plan and will be part of the project evaluation criteria.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 None

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 The Carbon Neutrality Action Plan is complex and attempts to deal with one of the most significant challenges facing society today. It is necessarily constituted from a number of projects which will require risk assessments as part of their business case / delivery plan. It also requires the co-operation and collaboration of all if lasting change is to be achieved. Therefore due to the scope of work and breadth of issues a risk register will be produced to form part of the Implementation Plan.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<p>Property <i>Improvements to property energy efficiency do not meet required targets.</i></p>	<p>By using government's Re:Fit programme the energy savings are provided.</p>	<p>Over the life of the programme new and improved technologies will come to market with the opportunity to install these in new property so eliminate the need for future retro-fit</p>
<p>Community Support <i>Stakeholders and residents:</i> <i>- do not wish to collaborate or sustain efforts over a long period as current enthusiasm wanes.</i> <i>- see the challenge to change as costly and negative.</i></p>	<p>A proactive programme of engagement with key stakeholders is built into the delivery of the Action Plan</p> <p>A campaign of communications that demonstrate the positive consequences of change not only to the wider environment but personally in terms of money, health and well-being etc.</p>	<p>Enable stakeholders and residents to design, develop and deliver their own actions.</p>
<p>Timescales <i>Carbon reduction aims are not achieved within timescales.</i></p>	<p>The Delivery Programme will identify projects that need to be implemented early, and have the greatest impact, to ensure carbon saving are accrued</p>	<p>Role for off-setting to achieve reduction aims in line with approach set out in the Action Plan.</p>

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
	as soon as possible – particularly important for large transformational projects that will take time to complete.	
<p>Project capacity <i>There are insufficient resources to deliver the work.</i> <i>Key personal are not available.</i></p>	<p>A resource plan will accompany the delivery plan. A project board has been set up to help steer and support the work. Leads for work streams will be identified to spread resource across the organisation to avoid over reliance on individuals.</p>	<p>Collaborations with external partners will add capacity. Use of students and graduates on projects will add capacity. Fostering community ownership and delivery of projects will add capacity.</p>
<p><i>Financial / VfM</i> <i>Return on investment is not achieved.</i> <i>Cost of implementation escalates.</i></p>	<p>Business cases will be undertaken to assess viability of projects.</p> <p>Funding and grants will be sought from government to offset the cost to the Council.</p>	<p>A community bond initiative could be used to raise local funding.</p> <p>Charges could be introduced to be ring fenced for project delivery.</p>
<p><i>Legal</i> <i>Risk of challenges regarding meeting of carbon reduction aims and project specific objections</i></p>	<p>Ensure regulatory compliance for implementation measures and projects</p>	
<p><i>Innovation</i></p>		
<p>Reputation <i>Negative reaction to the Council's new emphasis on carbon reduction.</i> <i>Campaigns are not supported by some sectors of the community.</i> <i>Criticisms are made over pace / extent of delivery</i></p>	<p>Communications will explain and give evidence to support the Council's approach. Concerns will be listened to and information provided to address these. An annual report will be published on progress towards the carbon neutrality aims.</p>	<p>Open forums will be used to give people the chance to exchange views and for the Council to hear from a range stakeholders and residents.</p> <p>An annual conference will be arranged to bring a wide range of audience together – to mark progress and gain ongoing commitment/support.</p>
<p><i>Other</i></p>		

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 **Background**

11.2 Since the Council declared a Climate Emergency a team of officers has been working on developing the Action Plan committed to in the declaration. This has included reviewing and up-dating the data on the Council's current carbon emissions performance and identifying the areas on which efforts most need to be focused. To support this a series of internal and external engagements were organised with the objective of :

- Demonstrating to the community the Council's leadership
- Gathering ideas and actions for the Council and others
- Identify sources of support – who can help and provide funding
- Developing a collaborative approach
- Build a community of the willing to be advocates and champions

11.3 Through this and the existing work a range of interventions, projects and initiatives has been drawn up and categorised to form the foundation of the Action Plan. As part of the Implementation Plan these projects will be evaluated in detail in terms of their impact (including equality impact), how easy and ready they are to be delivered and those that require longer lead in times or greater investment.

11.4 Investigations are also taking place into funds available and financing models that will support the implementation of the transformational projects which have the potential to not only positively impact on carbon reduction but provide a return on investment.

11.5 **Detailed Proposals**

11.6 The Winchester Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2010-2030 (Appendix 1) is the proposed response to the Climate Emergency declaration and covers both the aim of the Council being carbon neutral by 2024 and the district by 2030. As such its focus is on carbon emission reduction and elimination, with mitigation /off setting used as a means to balance carbon emissions to achieve net zero gain. The baseline year of 2017 is used as this the most currently available data and gives the Council's carbon emissions as 4,187 tonnes CO₂e and the District's as 629,000 tonnes CO₂e, increasing by an additional 205,000 tonnes CO₂e when the motorways are included.

11.7 The Action Plan is supported by a series of technical appendices that provide the detailed background to the policy context and framework, including climate emergency challenges and risks; a 'carbon neutrality' definition and scope; and the evidence base of data on carbon emissions; and the engagements held to gather views from local residents and stakeholders on what is important to them and what the priorities should be for the Council to reduce carbon emissions.

- 11.8 Based on this supporting evidence and information, three sources of emissions were identified as the highest contributors for both the Council and the District and so are the Action Plan's priorities for major project interventions:

Transport

Carbon emissions: Council operations = 1,500 tonnes CO₂e / District = 287,000 tonnes CO₂e (exc. Motorways)

- Deliver key studies in 2020 to take forward the City Movement Strategy with a focus on achieving carbon emission reduction:
 - i. Walking & Cycling Strategy;
 - ii. Freight Strategy;
 - iii. Parking Strategy.
- Develop an expanded network of EV charging points across the district – starting with up to 46 points on the council's own estate by 2024, adding to existing provision and working with partners to identify where more are needed.
- Develop additional Park and Ride facilities to increase capacity starting with the Vaultex site with at least 130 new car park spaces in 2020.

Property/Housing

Carbon emissions: Council operations = 420 tonnes CO₂e / District = 193,000 tonnes CO₂e

- To develop a Council led pilot Passivhaus housing scheme in Micheldever by 2021.
- To invest an additional £1m per annum on energy and water efficiency measures to Council housing stock.
- To bring forward the Local Plan update with an emphasis on low carbon housing development by 2021 and other appropriate mitigation and adaptation policies.

Energy

Carbon emissions: Council operations 1,780 tonnes CO₂e / District = 172,000 tonnes CO₂e

- Source 100% of all electricity purchased by the Council from renewable sources by 2021.
- Build or invest in large scale renewable generation project(s), e.g. solar farms, heat pumps, solar-battery car ports, anaerobic digester, wind farm.

Mitigation/ Offsetting

- Develop a programme of rewilding starting with planting at least 100 trees annually on Council land.
- In collaboration with partners and landowners identify up to 100 hectares of land to support additional tree planting and/or creation of grassland / wetland habitat / rewilding.

11.9 The Action Plan provides further projects against each of these priorities and in addition includes activities to respond to wider climate emergency impacts to build climate resilience. These are bio-diversity; recycling and waste; planning and development; and commerce and economy.

11.10 For the implementation of the Action Plan projects (and others as they are proposed) will be developed and delivered through a project management approach where all projects will be logged and assessed against a set of criteria to include, level of carbon saving, cost / return on investment, timescale, resource requirement and political/public impact etc. This will create a priority list of projects for an annual delivery programme and resource plan, against which progress will be monitored and evaluated. The implementation of this work will be overseen by a project board.

11.11 Conclusion

11.12 Cabinet are recommended to adopt the proposed Winchester Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2030 and that the Strategic Director-Services be given delegated authority to develop the detailed Implementation Plan, including delivery programme and resource plan.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 The option of not having an action plan in place in response to the declaration of a climate emergency was rejected as this would fail to meet the Council's commitment to demonstrate out how it will achieve the carbon reduction ambitions set out in the declaration.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB3171 Declaration of Climate Emergency 5 June 2019

<https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=428>

Other Background Documents:-

Title: Carbon Footprint Appraisal Report 2017/18

Date: 17th July 2019

Authors: Carbon Footprint Ltd

Title: Greenhouse gas emissions in Winchester District: Part IX Estimates and trends (2005-2017)

Date: 25 August 2019

Authors: Bob Whitmarsh / WinACC

<https://www.winacc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/greenhouse-gas-emissions-in-winchester-district-2019-final.pdf>

APPENDICES:

1. Winchester Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2030