

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 11 September 2019

**Title:** Climate Emergency

**Report of:** Director of Regeneration and Planning

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Jonathan Dow

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of report:** To agree next steps following the resolution by Full Council to declare a climate emergency.

**Decision type:** Key

**Officer recommendation(s):** That £36k per annum be approved towards the cost of a dedicated post, shared with Lewes District Council, to develop and support the delivery of a Climate Change Strategy.

**Reasons for recommendations:** Following the declaration of a climate emergency and a commitment by the Council to work in close partnership with local groups and stakeholders to deliver a carbon neutral town by 2030, this report seeks Cabinet's allocation of funds to enable the progression of the commitments made.

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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 At its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Eastbourne Full Council agreed the following resolution;

*Eastbourne Borough Council recognises there is a Climate Change Emergency and fully supports the Government and the Council's initiatives in fighting Climate Change.*

*Eastbourne Borough Council acknowledges the work achieved by this administration since 2007 to offset the negative effects of climate change.*

*In keeping with our ambitious programme to date, Eastbourne Borough Council commits to working in close partnership with local groups and*

*stakeholders to deliver a carbon neutral town by 2030.*

1.2 This paper sets out a proposed way forward for Cabinet to consider which would enable the council to start to deliver the actions set out in the resolution.

1.3 In order to respond to the declared climate emergency, there are two main policy approaches which the council may wish to consider - mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation addresses the root causes, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while adaptation seeks to lower the risks posed by the consequences of climatic changes.

Mitigation interventions could include, for example;

- Increasing use of electric vehicles, rather than petrol or diesel
- Using green energy sources (e.g. solar, wind) rather than fossil fuels
- Improve energy efficiency of buildings
- Promoting cycling, walking and public transport

Climate adaptation interventions could include, for example;

- Planning for extreme weather events, including flooding
- Designing new buildings to remain cool in higher summer temperatures
- Designing more shade into public spaces
- Planting drought-resistant plants and trees
- Water conservation and reuse measures, such as use of 'grey water'

1.4 It is suggested that both approaches be considered, because even if emissions are dramatically decreased in the next decade, adaptation will still be needed to deal with the global changes that have already been set in motion.

## **2 Delivering a Carbon Neutral Town**

2.1 This resolution is not the start of the council's work in this area. We have a considerable history of delivering low carbon initiatives that give us a sound foundation from which to accelerate our progress. We were one of the first Councils to invest in renewable energy (Solar Bourne) which generated over one million kwh of clean energy, enough to power 245 homes, and has already contributed £1.7m, far exceeding expectations. Recognising the vital role that trees play in absorbing and storing carbon dioxide emissions, our tree planting programme has, since 2002, added 2,860 trees to the street scene and landscapes of Eastbourne. The introduction of anti-idling zones has also played an important part in cutting carbon and making improvements to local air quality.

2.2 Our joint venture - Clear Sustainable Futures - which was established in 2017 is also enable us to actively explore other renewable technologies that will deliver the required step-change in carbon emissions, such as energy from sewage.

2.3 We adopted a sustainability policy in 2018 and will now build on this with our commitment to deliver a Carbon Neutral Town. This represents a significant enhancement to the council's work in this area and will require considerably more data collection, research and expert advice in its development than was the case with our previous high level policy.

- 2.4 The required skills, experience and expertise are not currently available within the councils' staff team and therefore it is recommended that Cabinet agree a sum of **£36k** towards the cost of a dedicated post to develop and support this work. Lewes District Council will also be considering a similar proposal for commitment of funds at its Cabinet meeting on 16 September 2019. The combined resource would enable recruitment of an officer with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to work across the councils to ensure a joined-up corporate approach to addressing the challenges of climate change. It is proposed that the post of Strategy and Partnership Lead for Sustainability be created for this purpose.
- 2.5 It is recognised that the development and delivery of a Climate Change Strategy will cut across the work of many parts of the council. To ensure all relevant functions and services are fully engaged in this process, an officer working group will be established. This would be chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and would include representation from;
- Business planning
  - Commercial business
  - Parks and outdoor services
  - Fleet management
  - Property
  - Tourism and enterprise
  - Housing (property services)
  - Planning policy
  - Legal
- 2.6 The group would work to ensure commitment from across the organisation to take Cabinet and Council's resolutions forward. The group, supported by the Strategy and Partnership Lead for Sustainability, would work with the Member Climate Change Strategic Panel (see section 3 below) to develop an action plan for carbon reduction and climate adaptation. Full costings for relevant interventions would be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet for further consideration.
- 2.7 Included in the group's responsibility would be to establish a baseline position, for both the council and the borough, against which to measure progress towards carbon reduction targets. Alongside this, the group would make recommendations for a proportionate, sustainable and affordable method of tracking that progress.
- 2.8 As an initial step, report authors have also been asked to include a sustainability impact statement in all future committee reports. This will aim to provide advice to members about the potential impacts, either positive or negative to achieving sustainability, of implementing any proposals set out in the report.

### **3 Climate Change Strategic Panel**

- 3.1 Given the breadth and complexity of this issue, it is also proposed that an advisory Member Panel be established to receive regular reports and give a

strategic oversight to this work as it develops. Such a Panel could help with the formulation of proposals around specific elements of this work, prior to recommendations being made to Cabinet when formal decisions need to be taken.

- 3.2 Given the council's wish to work closely with partners and stakeholders, members of the Panel will play a key role in promoting the councils' work in this area and building partnership solutions within the Borough. It is proposed that the Panel comprise 5 Members.
- 3.3 This Panel will supersede the previous Member Carbon Reduction Panel. The new Panel will have a wider remit to consider all factors impacting on climate change and to make recommendations regarding actions that the council could take in relation to both carbon reduction and climate adaptation.

#### **4 A community partnership for carbon reduction**

- 4.1 The council, acting in isolation, cannot possibly deliver the changes needed to achieve a carbon neutral town by 2030. However, it can take a leadership role in bringing key partners and the wider community together to focus on this issue and to work together to find solutions. To this end a new group has been established – whose working name is Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030 – which is bringing together key campaigning and action groups with the council and other relevant local bodies.
- 4.2 The council will work closely with this partnership in developing its plans for carbon reduction, climate adaptation and sustainability. It is hoped that the partnership will be able to play a key role in harnessing wider commitment and engagement across the communities of Eastbourne, to enable us to achieve our carbon reduction targets.
- 4.3 To kick start this partnership approach a launch event will be arranged to bring together interested parties – from the voluntary and community sector, local businesses, public sector and others. This event will raise the profile of the work, aims to gain more commitment and support from partners and will provide a forum for views to be shared about priorities for action.

#### **5 Financial appraisal**

- 5.1 These are costs in addition to the approved budget and will add to existing budget pressures.
- 5.2 Costs will be charged against the Business Planning & Performance budget for expediency.
- 5.3 Application will be made to grant funding bodies or funds from other sources to mitigate the additional costs to be incurred, once the post has been recruited to.
- 5.4 In addition to the costs noted in this report, there may be additional overhead costs incurred for travel and training required to fulfil the duties of the post.

## **6 Legal implications**

6.1 The EU and UK have adopted ambitious targets and legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency and increase renewable energy. In particular, the EU has adopted a framework for climate change and energy policy with targets for 2030, and the UK has adopted the Climate Change Act 2008.

6.2 The Council's actions to deliver a Climate Change Strategy and to allocate funds for specific interventions must be consistent with these targets and legislation.

*Lawyer consulted 05.08.19*

*Legal ref: 008475-EBC-OD*

## **7 Risk management implications**

7.1 Implementing proposals contained in this report would reduce the risk of the council not achieving its aspirations in relation to carbon reduction.

## **8 Equality analysis**

8.1 This report has no specific equality implications. Equality analyses will be undertaken of the various proposals developed subsequently to address the climate emergency.

## **9 Environmental impact analysis**

9.1 The proposals in this report, if implemented, will help the council to progress its commitment to working in close partnership with local groups and stakeholders to deliver a carbon neutral town by 2030.

## **10 Appendices**

None

## **11 Background papers**

None