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| Report to: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 5 February 2020 |
| Title: | Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030 – progress report |
| Report of: | Director of Regeneration and Planning |
| Cabinet member: | Councillor Jonathan Dow, Cabinet member for Climate Change |
| Ward(s): | All |
| Purpose of report: | To provide a progress report on Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030 |
| Decision type: | Key |
| Officer recommendation(s): | <p>(1) Delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Lead Member for Climate Change, to:</p> <p>(i) investigate the viability of moving the Council on to a green electricity tariff; and</p> <p>(ii), if appropriate, to sign the Council up to this tariff.</p> <p>(2) To approve the short term actions outlined within section 4 of this report.</p> |
| Reasons for recommendations: | To progress towards the aims of achieving Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030 as resolved in July 2019 |
| Contact Officer(s): | <p>Name: Kate Richardson</p> <p>Post title: Strategy & Partnership Lead- Sustainability</p> <p>E-mail: kate.richardson@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk</p> <p>Telephone number: 01323 415202</p> |

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper sets out progress to date and proposed next steps following the declaration of the climate emergency at Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC).
- 1.2 The declaration received unanimous support at Full Council meeting in July 2019.
It reads: “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.”

- 1.3 It was agreed by Cabinet in September that a post should be established to work on this agenda, funded jointly with Lewes District Council, to enable Eastbourne Borough Council to progress at pace. This position has now been filled. Kate Richardson started in post on 14 November 2019.

2 Summary of Council Action

- 2.1 Prior to the Climate Emergency Resolution, a range of carbon reduction work had already been undertaken throughout the Council, much of this as business as usual. Some examples are provided below:

2.2 Homes First

To reduce energy consumption, the Council has retro-fitted a variety of energy efficient lights, boilers and controls; and new boilers within our housing stock have hydrogen conversion capability.

Officers are continually evaluating new technology, for example heat recovery units and permeable resins (as replacement for impermeable surfaces).

2.3 Environment First

There has been improved use of IT to enable route optimisation, vehicle rationalisation and more efficient missed bin collections. The Council has reduced mileage by changing disposal locations and has planned a long-term procurement strategy for more fuel efficient and alternative fuelled vehicles.

2.4 Commercial Business

The Council has –

- been preparing the whole estate plan;
- developed and utilised a ‘Development checklist’ against which officers challenge themselves to provide the most sustainable developments they can;
- supported planning policy in developing sustainable travel solutions;
- developed a new sustainable waste vehicle depot;
- built new sustainable homes; and
- developed the recycling of construction waste.

2.5 Planning Policy

The Council has published a supplementary planning document for Sustainable Building Design.

2.6 Internal Business Operations

The staff car leasing programme has ceased and the Council has joined the easitNetwork group to encourage sustainable travel; access is provided to Cyclescheme; and flexible working is enabled. Video conferencing is enabled and encouraged to reduce travel between offices; single-use plastics have been reduced and eliminated where possible in council buildings.

2.7 Climate Change Strategic Panel

The inaugural meeting of the Panel was held on the 29th November 2019 consisting of 5 elected Members, supported by officers.

The Purpose of the Panel is:-

1. To advise the Cabinet Member for Climate Change on strategy and policy development matters relating to the delivery of the Climate Change Emergency resolution.
2. To invite appropriate experts to provide advice and information to help inform policy development work in relation to climate change, carbon reduction and climate adaptation.
3. To assist the Cabinet Member in the development and maintenance of partnership and stakeholder relationships for the furthering of climate emergency goals.
4. To receive progress reports on the strategy, policy and actions enacted by the council to address the climate emergency.
5. To aid the promotion of the council's work in this area.

The Council is working closely with the Eastbourne Eco Action Network, a Community Interest Company, to meet its carbon neutrality goals and they will be invited to attend future meetings of the Strategic Panel.

3 Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030

- 3.1 The Council cannot tackle the climate emergency alone. As such, a new partnership – Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030 (ECN2030) - has been set up to enable local people, businesses, community groups and others to come together and play their part.
- 3.2 To launch this important new work, a free event was held on the Saturday 18 January 2020 at the Welcome Building. As well as providing a high profile launch for ECN2030 the event was used to capture views and opinions of local people regarding how the climate emergency issues should be tackled locally.
- 3.3 Almost 1000 people attended the event which consisted of more than 30 different organisations, 40 stalls inside and out, highlights included: a double decker bus, 3 electric cars and 1 electric van on display; a children's climate library; puppet making; a vegetarian and vegan café; There were also a range of speakers who delivered inspirational presentations which were extremely well received throughout the day.

It was noted that this was the first event of this scale in Eastbourne to bring

together so many varied groups all with the shared common goal to reduce our impact on the environment and contribute to making Eastbourne Carbon Neutral by 2030. A national representative from Friends of the Earth who spoke at the event commented that it was the largest and best attended such event that he had come across anywhere in the country so far.

A 'comments wall' formed a central part of the event. A total of 244 suggestions were placed on the wall, responding to the question "What do you think we should do to make Eastbourne Carbon Neutral". The comments were very varied but fell generally into the themes of; energy, biodiversity, housing and 'other'. It is notable that nearly 50% of all comments related to transport, primarily increasing frequency and lowering the cost of public transport and enabling more cycling in the town.

It will take time to process all the detailed responses but these will be fed into deliberations around the preparation of the carbon reduction and climate change strategy.

The Council is grateful to all those who attended the day, provided exhibitions, gave presentations and contributed to the 'comments wall'.

Many personal pledges were also made on the day though many felt that it was time for a collective effort at both local and national scale in order to facilitate the significant shift required to reduce carbon emissions.

A full analysis of the comments from the day will be presented, in the first instance, to the Climate Change Strategic Panel which is due to meet in February 2020.

4 Next steps

4.1 To achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, the council needs to prioritise and urgently progress a number of actions. Proposed next steps are set out below for Cabinet's consideration and approval.

4.2 Following the launch event in January, the focus will be on preparing a detailed and costed strategy and action plan to enable us to achieve our carbon reduction ambitions.

Using the outcomes of the views expressed at the launch event, the Council will determine what other short term projects should be progressed as a priority in 2020/21. Beyond this a strategy to take the council to 2030 will be developed. This strategy will be presented to Cabinet in July 2020.

4.3 The Council will, jointly with Lewes District Council, explore opportunities to work with local providers of council owned housing. The purpose will be to discuss implications of the climate emergency on refurbishment, retro-fit and investment plans and to decide if a partnership approach could generate efficiencies of scale.

The decarbonising of the Council's council housing stock is a significant way in which the Council can directly contribute to the climate change agenda, reduce

fuel poverty by creating warmer and cheaper to run homes directly improving the lives of our tenants.

- 4.4 In order to measure progress towards our carbon neutral goal the Council will agree its approach to measuring carbon emissions and then determine its 2018/19 carbon baseline. The Council will then be able to measure its progress against this baseline.
- 4.5 In conjunction with the Lead Member for Climate Change, we will investigate moving the council on to a green electricity tariff at the end of the current contract which runs to 30th September 2020. The Council must provide 6 months' notice of contract changes, which means the changes must be agreed by end of March 2020.
- 4.6 The Council will publicise the Warmer Sussex scheme to enable retro-fitting of existing private housing stock and the Solar Together iChoosr project to enable residents to purchase PV panels.
- 4.7 Working with ESCC and other district and borough partners in East Sussex, the Council will establish an EV chargepoint strategy and draw up a plan for implementation in Eastbourne.

5 Financial appraisal

- 5.1 There is likely to be an increase in the cost of the electricity contract if we move to a green tariff. This is likely to be in the region of 0.5p/kWh.

6 Legal implications

- 6.1 The principal piece of UK-wide legislation relating to carbon neutrality is the Climate Change Act 2008. When first implemented, it required the UK to achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas* levels (relative to 1990 levels) by 2050, but in June 2019, further legislation was passed which revised the target upward from 80% to 100%.

*Greenhouse gases comprise primarily CO₂, but also methane, nitrous oxide and certain fluorocarbons.

The 2008 Act also provided for five-year carbon budgets and emissions trading schemes.

The legal obligations created by the Act fall exclusively on central government. Nonetheless, Eastbourne Borough Council can actively contribute to carbon reduction through its–

- management of its own estate and assets
- community leadership
- regulatory role, particularly as local planning authority – through adherence to the National Planning Policy Framework and its own Local Plan

- service provider role, especially as waste collection authority and housing authority.

At local level, climate change legal duties that apply specifically to district / borough councils include section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This requires that a local authority's development plan documents must, taken as a whole, include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in its local planning authority area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation, to climate change.

The Council's powers to take carbon reduction measures across any of these functions stem, if not from function-specific legislation, from section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, which grants the 'general power of competence' to qualifying local authorities.

Lawyer consulted 08.01.20

Legal ref: 008861-EBC-OD

7 Risk management implications

- 7.1 Failure to agree and progress the actions at pace could lead to failure to meet the aims and targets within the Climate Emergency Declaration of July 2019

8 Equality analysis

- 8.1 It is assessed that an Equality Analysis is not required for this report.

9 Environmental sustainability implications

- 9.1 This report directly relates to the achievement of making the Council zero carbon by 2030 and assisting the Borough to become Carbon Neutral. Implementation of actions to achieve carbon neutrality is key to mitigate the predicted negative impacts of climate change on the environment, economy and communities.

10 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Carbon Neutral Motion Full Council meeting July 2019 - Declaration of Climate Emergency

<https://democracy.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=2921>