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| Report to: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 10 February 2020 |
| Title: | Climate change and sustainability strategy – progress report |
| Report of: | Director of Regeneration and Planning |
| Cabinet member: | Cllr Matthew Bird, Cabinet Member for Sustainability |
| Ward(s): | All |
| Purpose of report: | To provide an update to the Climate Emergency Resolution of July 2019 |
| Decision type: | Key |
| Officer recommendation(s): | Cabinet is recommended to note the report and to; (1) Approve the ‘Next Steps’ actions outlined in section 5. (2) Approve the ‘Consultation and Engagement Proposals’ set out in section 4, and (3) Delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Lead Member for Sustainability, to; (i) investigate the viability of moving the Council on to a green electricity tariff; and (ii) if appropriate, to sign the Council up to this tariff. |
| Reasons for recommendations: | To progress towards the aims of the Climate Emergency Resolution of July 2019. |
| Contact Officer(s): | Name: Kate Richardson Post title: Strategy & Partnership Lead- Sustainability E-mail: kate.richardson@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk Telephone number: 01323 415202 |

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper sets out progress to date and proposed next steps following the declaration of the climate emergency at Lewes District Council (LDC) in July 2019.
- 1.2 It was agreed by Cabinet in September 2019 that a post should be established to work on this agenda, funded jointly with Eastbourne Borough Council, to enable us to progress at pace. This position has now been filled. Kate Richardson started in post on 14 November 2019.
- 1.3 At the Cabinet meeting in September 2019 it was also agreed to commit £100k from the current year's budget to climate emergency related work. £15k is funding the above post in the current year, with the remainder (£85k) being available, as required, as a carbon emergency fund to undertake relevant projects and initiatives. Appendix 1 provides details of how this budget has been allocated.

2 Summary of Council Action

- 2.1 Prior to the council's adoption of the Climate Emergency Resolution in July 2019, a range of carbon reduction work had already been undertaken throughout the Council, much of this is considered 'business as usual'. Some examples (not an exhaustive list) are provided below, under the 9 strands of sustainability set out in the September Cabinet report.

2.2 Energy

The Council has 253 air source heat pumps (ASHP), over 600 solar photovoltaic systems on its housing stock and some properties in Peacehaven have had high efficiency electric heating installed. To reduce energy consumption Homes First have retro-fitted a variety of energy efficient lights, boilers and controls in our council houses; New boilers within our housing stock have hydrogen conversion capability. The Homes First team is continually evaluating new technology, for example, heat recovery units are currently under consideration.

2.3 Waste & Recycling

There continues to be active engagement with residents to encourage recycling and to reduce waste. The Council has seen recycling rates increase substantially through the introduction of co-mingled recycling and the new garden waste collections.

Internally the Council has conducted a single-use plastics audit and have reduced and eliminated these where possible in council buildings.

The Council has also been developing the recycling of construction waste at its development sites.

2.4 Water

Homes First has been evaluating the use of permeable resins as replacement for impermeable outside surfaces.

There has been continued input into planning applications regarding flood mitigation. There are active multi-agency partnerships involved in coastal management. The Council will be part of the Sussex Flow Initiative project for a further 3 years. This project looks at upstream river flow in the River Ouse. The Council continues to be part of the Greater Brighton Water Working Group. Substantial ongoing work continues on natural flood management of the River Ouse.

The Council has installed a drinking water fountain at the new Newhaven skatepark and pumptrack and is progressing with an installation at Lewes skatepark.

2.5 Biodiversity

There has been an increase in wildflower planting areas and the Pollinator Strategy has been adopted. The frequency of grass cutting has been reduced in some areas to encourage re-wilding and biodiversity. The use of pesticides is limited and has reduced through the Pesticide Policy approved in October 2019.

2.6 Transport

Internally 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.

Waste and recycling collections form the bulk of corporate transport emissions so consideration is being given to ways in which this can be reduced. To reduce mileage the recycling routes with Lewes District have been optimised and the distance travelled to waste disposal locations has been reduced. The Waste and Recycling team supervisors use 2 fully electric vans and a long term procurement strategy to reduce emissions across the rest of the fleet will be developed.

£250,000 from the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fund was provided in October 2019 to help get work started on phase 5 of the Egrets Way network of paths – the new 1.1km stretch of the network will surface the route between Newhaven and Piddinghoe.

2.7 Air quality

There has been a campaign to reduce idling vehicles outside schools and the Council continues to monitor NOx and PM10. There is continued management of the 2 Air Quality Management Areas within Lewes town and Newhaven. The Council has secured a site for an air quality monitoring station in Newhaven, the station cabinet has been purchased and the Council is mobilising the infrastructure ready for installation before the end of the financial year.

2.8 Procurement

In line with the council's Community Wealth building commitments (see para 5.2) the Council is increasing the social value of contracts procured. We have also been making the environmental specifications within development contracts more rigorous.

2.9 Food

The Parks and Outdoor Spaces teams have been planting fruit trees where appropriate. The apple crop from Lewes House garden continues to be made available for community use.

2.10 Planning Policy and Development

Within the Commercial Business team the Council has been: preparing a 'whole estate plan'; developing and utilising a 'Development checklist' against which the Council can challenge itself to provide the most sustainable developments it can; supporting planning policy in developing sustainable travel solutions; developing a new sustainable waste vehicle depot; and building new sustainable homes. The Planning Policy team have published a supplementary planning document for renewable energy generation technology and a technical guide for electric vehicle chargepoints.

3 **Actions to progress the climate emergency resolution**

3.1 The council's climate emergency resolution in July 2019 set out a range of actions the council committed to take as a matter of urgency to start addressing the climate resolution. Progress against these actions is set out here.

- a) With the appointment of the Strategy and Partnership Lead for Sustainability late in 2019, progress has now started on the formulation of a comprehensive climate change strategy. This will be presented to Cabinet in July 2020.

- b) All reports being prepared for the 2020/21 budget, and indeed all other council reports now take into account the actions the Council will take to address the climate emergency. A 'Sustainability Implications Statement' section has been built into all reports. Report authors will be trained in how to understand and articulate these statements, which will be refined and developed over the next 6 months.
- c) The Climate Change Scrutiny Panel has been constituted and met for the first time on 30 January 2020.
- d) The Portfolio Holder for Sustainability has drafted a letter to the Government to set out the Council's intentions and call on the UK Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible, Following the General Election, this letter is due to be sent shortly both to Government and to the local MP.
- e) Progress has been made in establishing vehicles to enable partners, community group and local people to be fully engaged and involved in this work. Further details of this can be found in section 4 below.

3.2 In addition to the specific resolutions made by Council in July 2019, a number of additional initiatives have been progressed to ensure full organisational buy-in to this significant area of work, including;

- a) The inaugural meeting of the Officer Working Group was held on the 28th November 2019 with representatives from across the Councils services attending. Officers were briefed on the work required going forward and the need for all relevant functions and services to be fully engaged and committed to deliver of the corporate climate emergency objectives.
- b) The Staff Conference was held in November 2019 with a strong theme of the climate emergency running throughout.
- c) Various functions within the authority have developed their own team carbon reduction pledges and commitments.

4 Consultation and engagement proposals

4.1 The Climate Change Resolution made a strong commitment to the council working in partnership with others to progress its sustainability agenda. To this end a proposed approach to engagement has been developed. The purpose of this is to meet the following five main objectives;

- 1. To develop a **district-wide ownership** of the climate emergency, with the council and partners supporting each other in developing solutions to achieve a carbon neutral district by 2030

2. To enable the council to have the **input from local experts** into the formulation and development of strategy, policy and projects around this agenda
3. To **consult** with the community and stakeholders; hearing and considering their views as the council develops its plans and proposals
4. To support and encourage **voices from all parts of the community, in particular young people**, to help shape and deliver the future sustainability of the district
5. To keep the community and stakeholders **informed** of the council's progress

4.2 To achieve these objectives, it is proposed that two partnership bodies be established;

A Sustainability Panel

4.3 A first meeting was held November 2019 to bring together a range of representatives from local groups and organisations with an interest in sustainability. At that event the council shared its initial short term plans and sought partners' commitment further involvement and engagement.

The Panel, as is it is currently made up, comprises a combination of 'expert advisors' who have particular specialisms and professional expertise alongside others who are strong campaigners and community activists. Going forward it is suggested that the Panel membership be limited to those who it is felt are best able to fulfil the 'expert advisor' role (as per objective 2 above), with others being invited to participate in a Community Climate Change Forum (see below).

A Community Climate Change Forum

4.4 As stated in the council resolution, it is intended that there be a forum open to local communities, parish and town councils, voluntary and community organisations, businesses, educational establishments, nature groups, and bodies with an interest in agriculture food, health and transport.

This Forum's purpose would be to help develop a district-wide ownership of the climate emergency, provide a vehicle for communication and consultation and provide a focus for sustainability issues in the district.

To enable the Forum to have independence from the council, a third party will be commissioned to undertake its facilitation and administration. A budget has been allocated with which to commission this work. Expressions of interest will be requested from local not-for-profit organisations who may wish (singly or in partnership) to undertake the work.

In order to ensure the aspiration to have a strong local youth voice around these issues, the specification for Forum facilitation will include a request for bidders to set out how they will ensure young people are fully engaged and included. Plans are also in place to engage with the East Sussex Youth Cabinet to gauge their views on how they would wish to be involved.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 Over the past few months a new draft Corporate Plan has been drawn up which articulates the Council's ambitions and priorities for the next four years. A report on the draft Corporate Plan can be found elsewhere on this agenda. This is currently subject to public consultation and sets out 12 key proposed priority actions in relation to sustainability and climate change. The contributions provided by the Sustainability Panel (see section 4.3 above) have helped to shape this part of the draft Corporate Plan.
- 5.2 The draft Corporate Plan also clearly articulates the priority for building community wealth over the next four years. Achieving sustainability and building community wealth are intrinsically linked. Many of the actions set out in this report therefore will, therefore, be delivered in a way help achieve community wealth building objectives. The 5 principles of community wealth building¹ are;
- Plural ownership of the economy.
 - Making financial power work for local places.
 - Fair employment and just labour markets.
 - Progressive procurement of goods and services.
 - Socially productive use of land and property,
- 5.3 Paragraphs 5.4.1 – 5.4.12 of this report refer to each of the 12 key proposed priority actions for sustainability set out in the draft Corporate Plan, and sets out next steps, for Cabinets' consideration. To achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, the council needs to prioritise and urgently progress a number of actions at pace.
- 5.4 It should be noted that the actions set out in this section represent simply the proposed *early* action in some of these areas. **A much fuller, long term, costed plan which more fully addresses all 12 areas, will form part of the comprehensive climate change strategy to be presented to Cabinet in July 2020.**

¹ <https://cles.org.uk/what-is-community-wealth-building/the-principles-of-community-wealth-building/>

5.4.1 Carbon baselining

In order to measure progress towards our carbon neutral goal we will agree our approach to measuring carbon emissions and then determine the 2018/19 carbon baseline for the Council. We will then be able to measure our progress against this baseline. Appropriate consultants will be engaged if needed to assist in determination of the carbon trajectory to meet zero carbon targets across the authority and District.

5.4.2 Influencing others to achieve a net carbon zero district

The council will use its community and strategic leadership role with the aim of bringing about a shared commitment to carbon reduction across the district. Through its strategic partnership relationships with other key stakeholders locally (statutory, private sector, voluntary and community), there will be a strong focus on influencing others to contribute, with urgency, to the climate emergency.

In addition, as set out in section 4 above, a programme of engagement events and activities will be developed and delivered over the coming months which will help to share inform partners and residents about the contribution they can make. We will also make use of the full range of media channels (including District News, social media and traditional media routes) to promote key messages.

5.4.3 Shifting to zero carbon electricity generation

In conjunction with the Lead Member for Sustainability, 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 we must agree changes by end of March 2020. To this end, Cabinet is asked to agreed delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Lead Member for Sustainability, to investigate the viability of moving the Council on to a green electricity tariff; and if appropriate, to sign the Council up to this tariff.

To tackle wider district-wide shifts in this area, a Community Energy Forum will be established to act as a central point to co-ordinate and forward the community energy agenda. We will also continue work with other partners to implement the Greater Brighton Energy Plan.

We will promote, alongside other district and boroughs in East and West Sussex, the Solar Together scheme which will enable private residents to 'group-buy' solar PV panels at competitive prices. This, alongside the existing

Warmer Sussex scheme provides a range of ways in which owner-occupiers can get advice on retro-fitting their homes, to reduce energy consumption and cut their fuel bills.

5.4.4 Improving energy efficiency and decarbonising our Council Houses

The Council, jointly with Eastbourne Borough Council, will explore opportunities to work with other 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.

An additional £500k has been allocated within the Housing Revenue Account to contribute to the decarbonising of our own council housing stock. As well as directly contributing to the climate change agenda this will also reduce fuel poverty by creating warmer and cheaper to run homes, directly improving the lives of our tenants.

5.4.5 Encouraging more walking and cycling

Alongside other work that is already on-going to improve provision of cycle routes in the district, we will commission a feasibility study into an e-bikes scheme for the area. We will also encourage the establishment of a district-wide cycle forum in order to further explore how cycling can be promoted in the future.

5.4.6 Improving air quality through modal shift in local transport

We aim to take a strategic approach to our air quality work in conjunction with ESCC as a key partner. Whilst we work on a holistic strategy, an early focus will be on working with ESCC and other district and borough partners in East Sussex to establish an electric vehicle (EV) charge-point strategy and draw up a plan for implementation in Lewes.

5.4.7 The Greenest Local Plan

Have the greenest Local Plan and putting sustainability at the heart of our local planning processes is a central pillar of the sustainability work. This has begun with the agreement of the statement of community involvement which is crucial to the development of the plan. A new cross party Local Plan Steering Group of seven elected members has been established and met in January 2020. This group will agree the scope of the Local Plan review, in line with recent guidance from the Planning Advisory Service.

5.4.8 Increasing biodiversity

We will take a strategic approach to biodiversity, building on our existing plans in this area. We will look to increase wildflower and pollinator opportunities through cutting pesticide use on council land. We will also formulate an extensive tree planting plan. More detail on this will form a part of the comprehensive climate change strategy.

5.4.9 Influence reduction in emissions through agriculture and food production

We are committed to influencing and creating conditions for a reduction in emissions from agriculture and food production. Again, more detail on this will form a part of the comprehensive climate change strategy.

5.4.10 Reduce waste and waste related emissions

We are committed to reducing waste and emissions that arise from dealing with waste. Early work in this area is focused on calculating the carbon footprint of our current waste fleet with a view to considering how improvements can be made.

5.4.11 Flooding and coastal erosion

Some long term existing workstreams relating flooding and coastal erosion are continuing. Our overall strategic approach to these challenging issues will form a part of the comprehensive climate change strategy.

5.4.12 Energy efficient, climate resilient and adaptable housing

The aspiration to build and encourage affordable, energy efficient, climate resilient and adaptable locally sourced and provided housing is clearly set out in the draft Corporate Plan. A separate Housing Strategy for the district will be developed over the coming months to address this.

6 Financial appraisal

6.1 The finance implications of this report for this year have largely already been agreed as part of the Sustainability Fund 2019/20 (Report to the Leader 05 November 2019).
See Appendix 2 for more information.

6.2 There is likely to be an increase in the cost of the electricity contract (anticipated to be in the region of an additional 0.05p/kwh)

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 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, Lewes District 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 14.01.20

Legal ref: 008860-LDC-OD

8 Risk management implications

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

9 Equality analysis

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

10 Environmental sustainability implications

- 10.1 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.

11 Appendices

Appendix 1: Sustainability budget as agreed by Leader Decision (12 November 2019)

12 Background papers

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

Report to Cabinet: Climate Emergency, 16th September 2019

<https://democracy.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/documents/s12174/Climate%20emergency.pdf>

Sustainability budget as agreed by Leader Decision (12 November 2019)

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| Expert advice and support for community wealth building | £ 10,000 |
| Monitoring advice/tools for carbon base lining | £ 5,000 |
| Expert advice and support for carbon reduction measures | £ 10,000 |
| Tree planting and other sustainability initiatives | £ 20,000 |
| Solar Together | £ 5,000 |
| Climate Change Forum | £ 5,000 |
| OVESCO Sunny Solar Schools | £ 5,000 |
| Cycling initiatives | £ 20,000 |
| EV feasibility | £ 5,000 |
| Staffing | £ 15,000 |
| TOTAL | £ 100,000 |

