

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 9 July 2020

Title: Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Framework

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Director of Regeneration and Planning and Deputy Chief Executive

Cabinet member: Councillor Matthew Bird, Cabinet Member for Sustainability

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To provide sight of the strategy framework to be made available for stakeholder engagement work

Decision type: Key

Officer recommendation(s): Cabinet is recommended to note the report and to;

- (1) Agree the timeline for the production of the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy, adjusted in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, as described in para. 1.4.
- (2) Approve the strategy framework for targeted stakeholder engagement , as summarised in para. 5.1.
- (3) Approve the public engagement period of 10 weeks from 24th August 2020

Reasons for recommendations: To progress towards the aims of the Climate Emergency Resolution agreed by Council in July 2019.

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1 Introduction

1.1 On the 15th July 2019 Lewes District Council formally declared a Climate Emergency at Full Council and committed to: "...Ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with a shift to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030; Support and work with relevant agencies and stakeholders towards making the entire District zero carbon and

climate resilient by 2030.”

- 1.2 The Council originally aspired to producing a full strategy by July 2020, planning to consult and develop the plan in the preceding months. With the arrival of the Corona Virus pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in mid-March it quickly became apparent that the production of the strategy was going to be impacted.

Reduced staffing and partnership capacity due to emergency work would in particular impact upon our ability to perform the appropriate consultation that was needed and so we paused for a re-think about our timetable.

- 1.3 The pandemic and lockdown has been mentally and financially challenging for many residents as well as the Council and its staff. However it has also had some positive environmental and social impacts such as: improved air quality; an appreciation of carless streets; renewed interest in cycling and walking; and, an improved sense of community cohesion as society has learned very quickly how to pull together for the greater good.

Some outcomes which could have taken years of encouragement to develop have come together over days during this crisis. The Confederation of British Industry have noted that businesses which have for years insisted their workforce travel miles to an office, have realised that trusting their employees to work flexibly can actually improve the quality of work.

There is an opportunity to harness the positives of this situation and determine how best to take these on into the future. The council’s strategic approach can now build on these positives and work not to revert to the ‘old business as usual’. A new impetus can be given to the sustainability agenda by encouraging support for a green restart and green economic recovery that encourages community wealth building.

- 1.4 The pandemic has slightly delayed the development of our Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and has led to a re-think of our approach, which we believe will result in a stronger plan and more sustainable response that better reflects our strategic ambition.

It will relate better to the current circumstances as well as our residents’ and stakeholders’ opinions and attitudes that may have changed as a result of this crisis.

This report provides:

- A consultation draft strategy for consideration by Cabinet along with the background evidence completed to date;
- A plan for full and meaningful stakeholder engagement for a 10 week period from late August 2020;
- Enabling adoption of a final strategy by Cabinet in February 2021.

2 The Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Framework

- 2.1 The targeted stakeholder engagement draft of the Climate Change and Sustainability Framework is designed to explain to stakeholders the type of feedback we are seeking to enable us to develop a community owned strategy and directs readers to background information.

We have provided 'Strategic Goals' that have been developed from the commitments made within the Council Plan and we expect to be challenged on these in terms of the actions needed to achieve our net zero carbon target by 2030.

We will be seeking expert advice from our Sustainability Expert Panel and are procuring for a facilitated Community Forum. We will also seek views from our business communities, town and parish councils and it will be available to any interested party.

- 2.2 The Strategy Framework sets out some of the information that will be elaborated on within the full strategy, for example the districts carbon baseline, but focuses upon an initial draft of a 'vision' for the district and sets out the 7 strategic 'Action Areas'.

Each part of the framework is followed by questions that can be answered directly by stakeholders by the methods set out under 'Have your say' but will also be used by the Sustainability Expert Panel and the Community Forum as a basis for their facilitated discussion.

The Action Areas are currently as follows:

- Energy and the Built environment
- Sustainable Transport and Air Quality
- Biodiversity
- Agriculture and Food
- Reducing Waste
- Water
- Circular Economy and Community Wealth

3 Strategy Evidence Gathering

- 3.1 Despite the delay to the strategy itself, work on the gathering of evidence to justify the actions and goals within it has continued.

The Lewes District Carbon Baseline

The Council has commissioned consultants to provide an in-depth report into the districts emissions for 2017 (the most recent year available).

The report has not been completed yet but the baseline is known to be 542ktCO₂e.

The final report will provide insight into the source of emissions and the pathway to net zero carbon. It will be a key piece of evidence to inform the Sustainability Expert Panel as well as other stakeholders.

An additional report has also been commissioned to expand on the agriculture and land-use sector and its capacity for carbon sequestration. This report will form the basis of a dedicated workshop to be held during the engagement period.

3.3 Lewes District Council's baseline 2018/19

The Council's own carbon footprint is detailed within the report attached as appendix 2 to this paper.

This forms the base year against which we will monitor our progress to net zero carbon by 2030.

The Council's carbon footprint for 2018/19 is 1,590 tCO₂e

A new footprint report to include 2019/20 data will be produced with the full strategy in February 2020. From then on an updated report will be produced annually to better coincide with Quarter 4 reporting of corporate performance indicators.

4 **Climate change and sustainability projects**

4.1 Work to address the climate emergency has not ceased as a result of lockdown although there have had to be adjustments to ways of working. Below is a brief update as to work that has been carrying on or started in this period:

- The Council as a whole has rapidly enabled homeworking for staff to keep them safe whilst maintaining essential service provision. Staff and Councillors have rapidly adapted to and enabled remote meetings and as these become technologically easier will be something we can maintain to reduce future emissions from travel.
- Councillors and Officers have been working with East Sussex County Council to direct some of the Government's emergency active travel fund money into the district to provide safer cycling and walking routes.
- Tree planting has continued with 60 more young trees being planted during lockdown.
- Food caddy liners have been distributed to maintain and encourage food waste recycling.
- The Council is finalising arrangements to move onto a renewable green electricity tariff from the 1st October 2020.
- Proposals are being developed for the £500,000 HRA money already allocated to our own housing stock for carbon reduction initiatives.
- We have continued engagement with expert groups that will culminate in a cycle forum and a community energy forum.
- Officers Working Group has been convened and opportunity was provided to comment on the Strategy Framework.

5 Consultation and engagement proposals

5.1 We propose targeted stakeholder engagement to begin as soon as is practicable.

The public will be directed towards participation in the community forum but will still be able to comment directly if they wish during the engagement period.

The engagement proposals are set out in detail on page 10 of the strategy framework and are in summary, as follows:

- July-August 2020- formatting of the framework document for consultation
- August to end October 2020- public and stakeholder engagement
- November-December 2020 – final strategy drafted
- February 2021- final strategy is presented for approval at Cabinet

6 Financial appraisal

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications associated with the report. However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown has had far reaching implications on the Council's financial position. Updates and forecasts are being reported to Government on a monthly basis and are being reported retrospectively to Cabinet.

7 Legal implications

7.1 Whilst there is no express statutory duty on the Council to consult over its climate change and sustainability strategy, there is an implied duty to do so, (a) given the long-term importance of the strategy to everyone living in, working in or visiting the district; and (b) to harness the wide spectrum of views and expertise held by individuals, organisations and businesses across the area. The expected impact of the strategy creates a legitimate expectation that the community has an opportunity to shape the content.

Consultation must be fair, which means allowing adequate time for consideration and response. The length of time should be proportionate to the nature and impact of the proposal under consideration. In view of this and of the number of questions posed in the consultation document, ten weeks should be allowed for the submission of responses.

Lawyer consulted 04.06.20

Legal ref: 009247-LDC-OD

8 Risk management implications

8.1 Failure to agree and progress the strategy could impact upon the Council

achieving its net zero goals

9 Equality analysis

9.1 It is assessed that an Equality Analysis is not required for this report, but will be completed at a later stage when the full strategy has been prepared and is ready for adoption.

We shall ensure the framework strategy is available in alternative formats upon request, and that there are multiple ways to submit responses.

10 Environmental sustainability implications

10.1 This report directly relates to the achievement of making the Council net zero carbon by 2030 and assisting the district to do so also. 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

1. The targeted stakeholder engagement draft of the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Framework
2. Lewes District Council's Carbon Footprint