

**Report to:** Scrutiny

**Date:** 2 November 2020

**Title:** Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030: A Plan for Action

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

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Jonathan Dow – Cabinet member for Climate Change

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of report:** To agree the strategy and action plan to deliver Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030

**Decision type:** Key

**Officer recommendation(s):** (1) the Scrutiny Committee Considers the report; and  
(2) responds to the Cabinet with any recommendations it wishes to be considered.

**Reasons for recommendations:** To progress towards the aims of achieving Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030 as resolved in July 2019

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**Recommendations to the Cabinet:**

- (1) To approve the ‘Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030: The Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan’ for publication**
- (2) To approve the ‘Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030: A Plan for Action’ summary document for publication**
- (3) To require the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Planning and Regeneration to produce an annual progress report detailing the council and borough carbon footprints, and progress against the action plan in September each year.**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This paper introduces 2 documents: Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030: A Plan for Action (a summary document designed for public audience); and the Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030: Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan

(a more in-depth, technical report).

- 1.2 These plans have been produced as a result of the Climate Emergency Declaration made at Full Council in July 2019 and set out the borough wide strategy and vision for a carbon neutral Eastbourne by 2030 (ECN2030). The visions and actions contained within the strategy recognise the urgency of the climate emergency being faced whilst ensuring the Council works with the community to co-ordinate our response into meaningful and long-lasting action. With limited financial resources the council needs to ensure it makes the right decisions that will have a lasting positive impact on the town.
- 1.3 The Council originally aspired to producing a full strategy by July 2020. 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 in particular impacted upon our ability to perform the appropriate engagement that was needed. However, that work has now been undertaken enabling this report to be considered by Cabinet.
- 1.4 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 very quickly pulled 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 sustainable restart and economic recovery.

## **2 The Strategy**

- 2.1 Two documents have been brought forward for approval by Cabinet. Together they set the plan to decarbonise the council's own operations and how we will work in partnership with the community to deliver ECN 2030.

### **Appendix 1:**

## **ECN 2030. The Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan**

The full strategy (appendix 1), sets the policy, supported by an evidence base and action plan to deliver ECN 2030. It includes pathway analysis conducted using the SCATTER tool and illustrates the scope of the challenge faced and the opportunity the council has, to facilitate change and lead by example.

The strategy contains both the Borough-wide and Council's own carbon baselines and it also details the visions for Eastbourne in 2030 that build upon the council's Corporate Plan objectives. An action plan accompanies the strategy which sets out the path and work required to deliver a carbon neutral Eastbourne.

It is acknowledged that Eastbourne is at the beginning of a significant journey that will involve changing the way people think about and operate assets, and how the council works with and enables the community to deliver projects. It should be noted that some areas are at an early stage of development. Through annual reporting the public and Members will be kept up to date on evolving workstreams and the benefits they will bring to the town.

### **2.2 Appendix 2: ECN 2030. The Plan for Action**

The 'Plan for Action' (appendix 2) is a summary document designed for engagement with communities across the borough.

It defines the intent the Council has to act as an enabler and facilitator of change whilst being clear this cannot be done alone. Focus is made on key actions that individuals and communities can carry out to reduce their own carbon footprint and how they can get involved with community action.

The Council's Climate Change Strategic Panel and Eastbourne Eco Action Network (EEAN) have had a key role in developing this document. In addition the Leader, Lead Cabinet Member, Leader of the Opposition and EEAN Director, Miles Berkeley, have committed to achieving the ECN2030 goal and lead by example in their own lives by signing the pledge found at the start of this document.

## **3 The Borough Carbon Baseline- section 2 of the strategy (Appendix 1)**

### **3.1 The Borough Baseline is the measure of carbon dioxide emissions within the whole town as of 2017 (the most recent year for which there is complete data).**

Eastbourne Borough Council uses the BEIS Dataset which is produced by central Government annually 2 years in arrears. This is a carbon dioxide only figure against which we will measure progress towards our 2030 target. Using

carbon dioxide equivalents is more accurate as gases other than carbon dioxide cause global warming but this data is not yet used for national reporting. Eastbourne Borough Council, in line with other Local Authorities has access to an evolving data set which will likely enable more comprehensive reporting over the next few years.

- 3.2 In 2017 the town was responsible for direct emissions of approximately 296.7 kilo tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> (ktCO<sub>2</sub>) – this came from energy used for heating, power and transport within the town’s boundary, but it does not include the things we buy and consume which will have emissions within the items production, whether that be food, clothing or electrical goods.

#### **4 The Council Carbon Baseline- section 3 of the strategy (Appendix 1)**

- 4.1 This second baseline relates to the council only, and the emissions for which it is responsible.

The baseline has been calculated using the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol methodology and the appropriate annual conversion factors for 2018 and for 2019 issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial (BEIS). By using this method and these figures we are ensuring that the baseline emissions we measure can be reported accurately every year to 2030 using a peer reviewed and agreed process. Our choice of which emissions we include within the baseline has borne this in this in mind.

Baseline emissions are reported as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e) and are calculated using the Scope 1 and 2 emissions which are detailed within section 3 of the strategy.

- 4.2 Based on the Council’s directly controllable consumption of gas, electricity and fuel the baseline emissions for 2018/19 financial year are approximately **3,047 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)**.

The CO<sub>2</sub> portion of this figure is included within the Borough wide emissions of 296.76 ktCO<sub>2</sub>. As such the Council’s Scope 1 and 2 emissions accounts for around **1%** of the overall footprint for the borough.

#### **5 Resources to deliver the action plan**

##### **5.1 Staff**

- An internal Officer Working Group has been established to co-ordinate projects to deliver ECN 2030. This is attended by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Planning and Regeneration, Ian Fitzpatrick.
- A dedicated Strategy and Partnership Lead for Sustainability (shared with Lewes District Council), to manage delivery of the strategy and action

plan both internally and borough wide.

- Through the Decarbonising Our Housing Stock project a Community Development and Sustainability Specialist is being appointed to undertake tenant engagement work.

## 5.2 Financial

- The majority of capital funding for decarbonisation projects will be from existing budgets where the intention will be to direct spend towards low carbon options. As the Asset Management Plan is currently being determined, the action plan reflects the need to assess assets on a case by case basis. Any additional capital bids will be made on an invest to save basis
- Competitive funding grants applications will be pursued as and when they become available. An example of this is the recent bid made to the Net Zero Innovation Fund.
- Non-competitive grants, such as those for Electric Vehicle Charge-points currently available through OLEV, will also be assessed for suitability and applications made where appropriate.
- £500,000 has been allocated to the Decarbonising Our Housing Stock (DOHS) project that will run through to 2024, overseen by a project board that includes the Cabinet Members for Sustainability and Direct Assistance Services. The DOHS project has multiple objectives within the themes of stock analysis, solution development, supply chain development and tenant engagement. The project will enable the primary outcome to decarbonise all the EHL housing stock by 2030.

## 6 Financial appraisal

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. As noted in section 5.2, any capital schemes will be funded from current budgets or be on an invest to save basis. Grant funding applications will need to consider the cost of any on-going revenue or capital costs and ensure these can be met from existing budgets.

## 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%.

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.

As the Council's executive, Cabinet is the appropriate body to agree the officer recommendations set out on the front sheet of this report.

*Lawyer consulted 06.10.20*

*Legal ref: 009576-EBC-OD*

## **8 Risk management implications**

- 8.1 Failure to agree and progress the strategy could impact upon the Council achieving its net zero goals. Delaying action will make actions financially more costly, potentially increasing the requirement for carbon offsetting.

## **9 Equality analysis**

- 9.1 An Equality analysis has been undertaken on these proposals. This has concluded that;

Improved responses to the impacts of climate change and reducing carbon emissions will generate co-benefits such as improved air quality, and this would generally be positive for all residents in the borough. It was noted also that children will be the owners of our legacy of carbon emissions, and that we have a duty to do what we can to reduce these as soon as possible.

Potentially, vulnerable residents may be more susceptible to the impacts of climate change. For groups such as the elderly, low-income households and those with certain underlying health conditions, tackling climate change is particularly positive. The strategy itself includes actions which will assist different need, including those least able to pay for home improvements to reduce their energy bills, enabling them to cope better with unpredictability of energy prices.

## **10 Environmental sustainability implications**

10.1 The strategy is key to delivering the carbon neutrality goal of Eastbourne borough Council by 2030. It will seek to ensure that carbon implications are taking into account throughout the Council and in all decisions. 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 – ECN2030- Climate Emergency Strategy: Baseline Report and Action Plan
- Appendix 2 – ECN2030- A Plan For Action

## **12 Background papers**

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

- [Eastbourne Borough Council Full Council - Wednesday, 10th July, 2019 6.00 pm](#)
- [Sustainability Policy](#)
- [ECN2030- Cabinet update February 2020](#)