

## Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy

**CREATION OF A CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER ROLE WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the creation of a Climate Change Officer role within Environmental Services to improve service provision, build service resilience and support the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2027.

2. Recommendation

**Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the creation of a Climate Change Officer post (Grade 10) at £49,450 per annum including on costs be approved, to be funded from General Fund Reserves.**

3. Detail

In 2019 the Council made an ambitious commitment to become carbon neutral by 2027. The Council created its Climate Change Strategy and Green Futures Programme in 2020 to provide strategic direction with regards working towards this target. The programme ensures that consideration for climate change issues are embedded across all service areas within the Council.

A gap analysis has recently been undertaken within Environmental Services to establish what resources are needed to achieve the Council's climate change ambitions. In addition, in December 2022 the Council had an external peer review with particular focus on the Council's approach to tackling climate change. One of the initial findings of the peer review team was that the Council has "one of the most comprehensive approaches to carbon reduction we've seen – passion shines through from Cllrs and officers. Cross-cutting approach with buy in from critical service areas". However, they go on to say that achieving carbon neutrality would be a challenge.

The gap analysis highlighted that whilst the high level strategic governance around the Council's climate change ambitions are managed, additional resources to deliver the day to day actions within the overarching Green Futures Programme are needed.

It is therefore proposed that a new Climate Change Officer role is created which will focus on engaging with key stakeholders, both internally and externally, as well as the delivery of actions to drive progress towards achieving carbon neutrality. This will enable climate change to be further embedded at an operational, as well as a strategic level.

The role will be based in Environmental Services but will provide a supporting role to all service areas across the Council. The role will actively seek opportunities in support of reducing carbon emissions and will play a key role not

only in reducing the Councils emissions, but also working towards the wider target of carbon net zero across the Borough.

Background and supporting information on the proposed changes can be found in the supporting document shown in appendix 1, with information about the Council's Carbon Footprint at appendix 2. Appendix 3 is confidential and shows where the role sits in the Council's structure.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The cost of the proposed Climate Change Officer post at Grade 10 (top of scale) is £38,150 at estimated 2023/24 pay rates, which equates to £49,450 including on costs. The addition of this post to the establishment would have to be funded directly from General Fund Reserves balances.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The UK has a legally binding target to become net zero carbon by 2050. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of their functions. Furthermore, section 2(1) of the Local Government Act 2000 introduced a power that permits local authorities to do anything that they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

No comments

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows.

UNISON fully supports the creation of this important role within the Environmental Services team. As the report mentions, the Council have a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2027 which this post will contribute towards. They will be seeking opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and liaising with all areas of the Council to improve awareness and access funding opportunities.

8. Data Protection Compliance Implications

N/A

9. Equality Impact Assessment

N/A

10. Background Papers

N/A

**APPENDIX 1****1. Corporate Priorities**

The corporate vision for the Council is 'a greener, safer, healthier Borough, where everyone prospers'. A key aim for the Environment is to 'protect the environment for the future'. This will be achieved by 'developing plans to reduce our carbon emissions to net zero and start implementing them'

**2. Climate Change and Green Futures**

The Council created the Climate Change Strategy and Green Futures Programme in 2020. The programme identified 145 actions that would be implemented to reduce the Council's emissions. Ninety percentage of those actions have either been completed or are in progress.

The Climate Change Strategy is being refreshed and a new carbon management plan being produced. The revised strategy, and carbon management plan which contains around 150 strategic actions, will provide the strategic, direction of travel for 2023/24.

To ensure the strategy remains fresh and current it will be reviewed annually. A public consultation exercise will be undertaken in the first year and any agreed actions will be incorporated as part of the initial review process to ensure the strategy notes the views and aspirations of the Borough's residents. The new Climate Change Officer role will play a key part in managing and reviewing the findings of the consultation process.

**3. Current Performance**

The Council is achieving a year on a year reduction. As is shown in appendix 2 for 2021/22 the Council achieved 3099 tCO<sub>2</sub>e which was a 3% reduction from the previous year. However, there is still a significant amount of work to be done and the creation of a new Climate Change Officer role will support colleagues across the authority in achieving results in their services areas.

**4. Peer Review**

The findings of the Peer Review Team were that the Council was performing well in terms of its approach to climate change and applauded the ambitious commitment of being carbon neutral by 2027. However, the findings also highlighted that achieving carbon neutrality will be a challenge and that achieving the final 20% reduction will be the most difficult. The Council therefore still has to remain progressive and invest in climate change if the target is to be achieved. The creation of a Climate Change Officer will ensure that the Council has the appropriate structure in place to be able to investigate and address the hard to reach areas which will become more apparent as the Council continues its climate change journey.

## 5. Rationale for changes

As previously indicated an internal review of Environmental Services and the resources needed to ensure the Council moves forwards with regards climate change has been undertaken. The review considered where capacity gaps are apparent in terms of service delivery, namely with regards to progressing climate change at the pace necessary to support the Council in achieving its commitment of being carbon neutral by 2027.

It is proposed that a new Climate Change Officer be created. The new role will:

- Build contingency and service resilience across all Council Departments
- Ensure the Council has capacity to investigate and bid for external funding
- Support the Council's ambition with regards climate change.
- Align synergies within related areas of work.

## 6. High level functions of the role

The high level functions and duties of the Climate Change Officer role is shown in the table below.

| Main Duties   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead on Climate Change communications, working with corporate communications</li><li>• Manage and lead on school/community group presentations and engagement to build social capital around climate change.</li><li>• Engage and be involved with strand leads and other stakeholders across the Council in the delivery of actions within the different climate change strands</li><li>• Develop and deliver carbon literacy training across the Council.</li><li>• Monitor climate change performance and be responsible for the delivery, development, collating and reporting on the climate change elements within Green Futures, including the production of the Councils annual carbon footprint</li><li>• Research and be responsible for following up on funding opportunities i.e., LAD funding projects/Sustainable Warmth, EV Decarbonisation funds. Signpost relevant departments to potential funding streams.</li><li>• Represent the Council at LAEP and other climate change meetings</li></ul> |

## 7. Job evaluation

The job description for the new post of Climate Change Officer has been reviewed under job evaluation. The salary apportioned to the post through the job evaluation process, and the associated additional on costs, are shown in the 'financial implications' section.

**8. Financial Implications**

The substantive salary for the Climate Change Officer is shown in the table below.

| Role                              | Salary (top of grade) | Salary with on cost (31.8%) |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Climate Change Officer (Grade 10) | £36,336               | £47,890                     |

**9. Structure**

The current and proposed structures are shown in appendix 3.

## APPENDIX 2



# The Council's carbon footprint

