

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION BUDGET1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the revised Climate Change Strategy and the creation of a climate change communications budget.

2. Recommendation

The Policy Overview Working Group reviewed the strategy on 8 June 2023 and RECOMMENDS that Cabinet RESOLVE that:

- 1. The revised Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan be adopted and approved**
- 2. The creation of a £10,000 climate change communication budget be approved.**

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. Ninety-one percentage of the actions identified in the original carbon management plan, which were part of the original climate change strategy, have been completed or are in progress. The delivery of these actions has contributed to the Council reducing its carbon footprint to 3,099 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions (tCO₂e) in 2021/22. This is a 17% reduction from the recalculated 2018/19 carbon emission baseline.

Climate change is a complex and changing dynamic. The climate change strategy therefore needs to be revised on a regular basis to reflect this and ensure it remains up to date. The climate change strategy has therefore been reviewed and revised.

The revised climate change strategy has been streamlined with ten key strategic themes identified as the priority areas. The ten themes are cross cutting and cover all the key topic areas which are necessary for addressing climate change. The key themes ensure climate change is embedded across all of the Council's own operations. The themes also ensure that the need to engage with residents and businesses in support of positive behaviour change is enhanced further. The revised climate change strategy includes 133 actions as part of the revised carbon management plan.

To ensure the strategic direction the Council is taking, with regards climate change, meets the aspirations of the Borough's residents, a public consultation exercise is currently in progress on the revised draft climate change strategy. The information obtained from the consultation will then be used to inform the revised strategy when it is produced in March 2024. It is intended that the

consultation approach will be cyclical, with the information being used to inform the content of future strategies.

In December 2022 the Council had an external peer review with particular focus on the Council's approach to tackling climate change. Whilst the peer review found that the Council has "one of the most comprehensive approaches to carbon reduction we've seen" the review team went on to say that achieving carbon neutrality would be a challenge and recommended that the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be enhanced to include investments that will be required to support the Council's Climate Change ambitions.

In support of achieving carbon neutrality the Council recently approved a new Climate Change Officer role. Whilst the high level strategic governance and programme management are addressed, a gap analysis has identified that the small budget allocated to promote stakeholder engagement, (currently £4,000 with a focus on delivering the Green Festival events and £5,000 to support the Green Rewards platform), required additional investment.

It is therefore proposed that a communication budget to the value of £10,000 is created. The budget will be used in support of engagement with key external stakeholders, as well as supporting the promotion and the delivery of actions within the new carbon management plan. This is to assist the Council's commitment and progression towards achieving carbon neutrality, as well as a wider target of net zero.

A copy of the revised climate change strategy included at appendix 1.

4. Financial Implications

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

There is no budgetary provision in place for the proposed annual Climate Change Communications budget of £10,000. If approved, as this is an ongoing requirement, it is proposed that this cost would be funded directly from General Fund Reserve balances.

5. Legal Implications

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

The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 introduced a target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is a legally binding target. 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:

No comments

8. Climate Change Implications

The Comments from the Waste and Climate Change Manager were as follows:

Any comments from the Waste and Climate Change Manager are included within the report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any [OFFICIAL (SENSITIVE)] information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and including with this report.

11. Background Papers

Nil.