

Strategy & Resources Committee Tuesday, 22 September 2020

Climate Change Update Report

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Publication status:	Unrestricted.
Recommendations:	That the Committee note the progress made against the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency in February 2020.
Appendices:	None.
Background papers defined by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985	None.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On the 13th February 2020 the Council resolved to declare a climate emergency. This recognised the consequences of global temperatures rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius and the duty of all governments to prevent this from happening and limit the negative impacts of an increasingly erratic climate.
- 1.2 The initial target set out in the motion was for this committee to formally agree a climate change action plan as soon as practicable. Due to staff being redeployed as part of the Council's Covid-19 response, this work has been delayed. As a consequence, this report will provide an update on the Council's climate change workstream but does not include a draft climate change action plan. The draft action plan will be brought to this committee once consultation has been held with Officers and Councillors on the proposed actions.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council has undertaken activities that serve to reduce its carbon footprint for many years (for instance, its head office had solar panels installed on its roof over a decade ago). However, its formal recognition of climate change began with a presentation and discussion on climate change in January 2020 (see minutes of Strategy & Resources Committee Thursday, 23rd January, 2020 7.30 pm). This was followed by a motion proposed by Councillor Botten, at the Council Meeting on 13th February 2020, for the

Council to declare a climate emergency and establish its own climate change action plan.

2.2 At the Full Council meeting in February, the climate change motion was agreed by Councillors, thus providing a formal mandate for Officers to progress with a dedicated climate change workstream.

2.3 Included in the climate change motion was the proposal that the Council will establish its own climate change action plan, with targets to cut its environmental impact and become carbon neutral by 2030. In addition, the motion specified that the Council will engage with other councils in the South East, and its residents, businesses, and young people in the District to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

3. Update on climate change activities

3.1 In order to maintain momentum with the climate change workstream during the Covid-19 epidemic, and also to progress the climate change action plan, several activities have been undertaken since the declaration of the motion:

- Feasibility work related to the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points is in progress, and schemes discussed with other local authorities in Surrey, including different options for funding this work.
- The Council held a climate change event with a local primary school to begin its engagement with younger people in the District. The event yielded several ideas from the pupils of the school, which will be considered in the Council's action plan.
- The Council's climate change officer continues to regularly attend climate change partnership meetings with officers from other local authorities in Surrey, and with other partners and stakeholders such as Surrey Hills and High Weald AONBs, Surrey Climate Commission and Surrey Air Alliance.
- A report to establish the organisational emissions of the Council is also being drafted, and work is underway to ascertain the data the Council has available to inform this work, such as the energy efficiency/energy consumption of its key property assets. In addition, the report will also include district-level emissions data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, to provide further insight into key emissions sources.
- The Council renewed its support of Action Surrey, who assist residents with improving the energy efficiency of their homes.
- Scoping work has been undertaken with regard to bringing new Council property developments to an operationally net zero standard.
- The Council has successfully capitalised on its previous ICT investments to enable a significantly larger amount of its staff to work from home.
- The Council met with the Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change.
- The Council has conducted a staff commuting survey, which has provided primary data that can inform future policy development in this area.

4. Action Plan update

- 4.1 A climate change action plan for the Council is being drafted and will soon enter its consultation phase with Officers and Councillors. Unfortunately, progress has been delayed due to staff redeployment related to the Council's response to Covid-19.
- 4.2 Officers will invite Councillors to register their interest with Democratic Services, to attend a climate change workshop to discuss and review the draft action plan in October 2020.
- 4.3 After the workshop, Councillors feedback related to the proposed actions in the plan and their strategic priorities will be incorporated into a revised version. The revised plan will then be brought to the next scheduled Strategy & Resources Committee for Councillors to formally consider for approval.
- 4.4 Once the action plan has been approved, it will serve as a roadmap for the Council to progress towards achieving its climate change objectives.

5. Climate Change implications

- 5.1 The Council's climate change action plan will clearly have implications related to its commitments in this area. Further details will be available once the plan has been approved by Councillors.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 There are no proposals in this update report. Furthermore, specific equality implications will be investigated in relation to each target in the forthcoming climate change action plan. Yet it is expected that a healthy climate and reduced carbon emissions across the district will benefit all residents.

7. Any other corporate implications where applicable

- 7.1 The climate change workstream will impact all areas of the Council's operations. There will likely be resourcing implications (staff and capital) related to the delivery of the climate change action plan. However, it is appropriate to consider these during the scoping and prioritisation work related to the proposed actions in the climate change action plan.

8. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

- 8.1 There are no specific finance implications rising from this report, no additional costs have been identified and there is no expected impact on the Council's financial position.
- 8.2 With the Council's financial constraints, any financial spend identified from the Action Plan must be contained within the current set budgets.
- 8.3 All opportunities of external funding and support must be considered and used to aid

and help the Council achieve the goals of meeting the climate change emergency. If any of the schemes are outside the set budget, then income and or grants from outside parties must be found so the set budget is not overspent.

9. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report, but the Head of Legal and her staff will provide advice to Officers on any legal and governance issues arising during development of the action plan.

9.2 The report proposes a comprehensive action plan for consultation. This satisfies the requirements set out in case law, namely that:

- The consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- The Council must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to enable intelligent consideration and response;
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and
- The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the proposal.

9.3 Further consultation may be required on specific measures which result from the formalised action plan, in accordance with the Council's established practice and legal obligations.

10. Conclusion

10.1 This report recommends that the Committee note the progress and updates related to the Council's climate change workstream. Councillors can contact Democratic Services to register their interest in the October climate change workshop, where the draft action plan will be discussed. It is expected that Climate Change will next feature in the Strategy & Resources committee in November 2020, where the draft action plan will be offered for committee approval.

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