

Update on Climate Emergency Action Plan

Report of the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development
(Portfolio: Environment)

Recommended:

1. That OSCOM endorse the 6 monthly progress update of the Climate Emergency Action Plan
2. That OSCOM endorse the proposal for holding the Climate Emergency Action Plan all member workshop in late 2020.

SUMMARY:

- This report provides an update on the climate emergency action plan since it was endorsed by OSCOM at its meeting in March 2020 and approved by Council in June 2020.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan since it was endorsed by OSCOM at its meeting in March 2020 and approved by Council in June 2020.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council declared a climate emergency on 4 September 2019 and committed to '*investigating clear and effective options to become a carbon-neutral organisation*'. Through the efforts of seven cross party member and officer work streams the Council was able to produce a Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP). This was approved by the Council in June 2020.
- 2.2 As part of the approval it was agreed that OSCOM would be the forum for formally monitoring progress on the CEAP and that reports would be presented at 6 monthly intervals. This would also provide the opportunity to highlight particular areas and propose new actions. These would then form part of a OSCOM sponsored workshop which would involve all members. If there are new actions to be incorporated into the action plan, then these would need to be presented to and agreed by Council.

3 Climate Emergency Action Plan Update

- 3.1 The CEAP has always been seen as a living document. Actions may happen quicker than originally anticipated, for example as a result of changes in behaviour or in reacting to situations that we may face. The pandemic is a live example and this was highlighted to members at the Council meeting.

- 3.2 Responding to the pandemic has meant that quicker progress has been made on certain aspects of the action plan than others but has also caused issues in other areas. As the Council works through its response to COVID 19 the 'green recovery' will continue to be at its core.
- 3.3 The fundamental changes in the Council's work practices and how customers access services have resulted in real progress being made particularly with the 'smarter working and use of technology' theme. This relates to the actions of digital streaming of meetings, the use of video conferencing and, with most staff working from home, the consequential benefits of reduced printing. The table in annex A outlines the reduction in printing over previous months. The recent increase in printing can be attributed to those parts of the Council's work which still require hard copies for example, committee papers, evidence for formal legal processes.
- 3.4 There has also been a reduction in travel to and from work and for the attendance of meetings. The putting in place of these enforced measures has demonstrated that a change in working practices can be achieved. However, there is a need to recognise that in some instances to fulfil the Council's function there remains the need for travel, including for visits and face to face meetings. Officers are currently monitoring the change in business travel.
- 3.5 Not only is there a refocus on how the Council undertakes its business but also how people access our services. For My Test Valley, our self-serve rate in May was 67%, June 56% and July 57% compared to this time last year, May 2019 37%, June 2019 39%, and July 2019 31%
- 3.6 Some of the other implications of the pandemic (and associated lockdown) have been less beneficial in relation to the wider environment. As has been noticed across the country, the importance and usage of public open spaces has seen significant increase since lockdown eased. This highlights the value and importance of diverse open space provision for physical and mental wellbeing. A number of these sites have seen problems with litter; while the litter bins have previously had adequate capacity in such spaces, they have been overwhelmed, reflecting greater use of the spaces. There was also a notable increase in fly tipping particularly whilst Hampshire Waste and Recycling Centres were closed (with a rate of 180 incidents in April 2020, compared to 104 and 108 in April 2019 and April 2018 respectively). The rate of fly tipping remains elevated.
- 3.7 From a waste and recycling perspective, whilst the amount of recycled material has increased, so has general waste. There was an increase of approximately 10% (2kg per property) on general waste collections during the lockdown period, which may reflect more people at home rather than at school / work / eating out etc. Subsequently the figure started to level out, standing at about a 5% increase at the end of May.

- 3.8 The fuel usage in running the fleet and hence associated emission have increased between 2018/19 and 2019/20 (from about 870,000 to about 939,900kg CO₂equivalent). This increase is likely to have resulted from additional fuel requirements for waste collections and management of open spaces that have been development within the Borough, as well as taking on the glass waste rounds (latter involving 2 additional HGVs).
- 3.9 Demand for the garden waste collection service substantially increased, with increased pressure added to the rounds. As a result, additional rounds have been put in place and it is anticipated that this will remain the case going forward. While this will increase our recycling rate it will also increase the fuel usage by the fleet in delivering this service. There is likely to have been a temporary reduction in fuel usage by some of the fleet during lockdown, for example mechanical sweepers were not run as part of street cleaning as this represented a non-essential service. However, this highlights the need to continue to progress with the identified action of the phased replacement of vehicles with those powered by alternative fuels.
- 3.10 We have made progress on a number of the other actions referred to in the Action Plan. A summary is provided below:
- The work to replace the boilers at Beech Hurst is underway and due to be completed this autumn.
 - A review has been undertaken on energy purchasing, as our current contract runs out in the autumn. As a result of the review, we have taken the decision to move to a zero carbon electricity tariff which will see the electricity used being generated from non-fossil fuel sources.
 - A review of the potential for renewable and low carbon energy sources in the Borough (to inform the next Local Plan) is well underway, with the final report due this autumn. This is a high level assessment to inform planning policy.
 - The refined Issues and Options consultation for the next Local Plan has highlighted its potential role in responding to climate change and identified some of the policy options we could explore (including on energy performance and increasing tree coverage). Some of the responses to the consultation are supportive of the proposed approach to climate change.
 - E-billing by Revenues is reducing the use of paper. Since being introduced in 2016/17 the numbers of E-billing has increased. Currently 17% of Council Tax and 32% of Business Rates bills are issued via E-billing.
 - Three refuse collection vehicles with electrically operated bin lifts have been ordered and are due to be delivered at the end of this year. Carbon savings per vehicle are anticipated to be in the order of 2,000kg CO₂ per year.
 - Two further electric vehicles have been ordered to replace two diesel vans. In addition, preliminary survey work has commenced to establish feasibility of the infrastructure required for the fleet as it becomes increasingly reliant on electricity as its source of power.
 - The 9th September Cabinet meeting is scheduled to consider the Green Space Strategy – this includes actions that link across to a number of the CEAP actions in the Natural Environment theme.
 - A business event was held in relation to promoting best practice and accessing support from the Sustainable Business Partnership – this was a virtual event rather than being held in Andover due to the pandemic

- 3.11 Based on the above, we anticipate that we should have deliverables by the end of the calendar year comprising the purchase of additional electric vehicles; receipt of the three refuse collection vehicles with electric bin lifts; moved onto a zero carbon electricity tariff; have completed the installation of the more efficient boilers for Beech Hurst; and received the final report for the renewable and low carbon energy study.
- 3.12 As part of the CEAP it was indicated that we would have an annual OSCOM-sponsored workshop to consider new ideas and opportunities – it is proposed that such a workshop is organised towards the end of this calendar year. It is proposed to have the next monitoring report to OSCOM in March 2021. This would mark the 1st anniversary of the CEAP. This report would reflect on both progress implementing the CEAP and the outcomes of the workshop. Any change to the CEAP would require reporting back to Council following OSCOM.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 Since the CEAP was endorsed by OSCOM the pandemic has created a fundamental change to the way we live and work. Even in the face of this challenge progress has still been made with the CEAP. In response to the pandemic the Council has adapted both the way it works and the services it provides. However, there have been consequences arising from the pandemic which have put pressure on some Council functions and progress of elements of the CEAP.
- 4.2 OSCOM are asked to endorse the progress made and the timetable for holding the CEAP workshop.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
Climate Emergency Action Plan (June 2020)			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1		
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