

Updating the Climate Emergency Action Plan

Report of the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development (Portfolio: Climate Emergency and Countryside)

Recommended:

- 1. That the refreshed draft Climate Emergency Action Plan (attached as an Annex) be noted and endorsed.**
- 2. That the refreshed draft Climate Emergency Action Plan, annexed to the report, be recommended to Cabinet.**

SUMMARY:

- The Corporate Action Plan includes an action for the Council to review its Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP). The refreshed version, and its actions, has been shaped by the cross-party Climate Emergency Working Group.
- The proposed draft CEAP is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to seek endorsement prior to being put forward for formal approval.

1 Introduction

- 1.1** This report updates the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work undertaken to date to refresh the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP).
- 1.2** The first CEAP was published in 2020 after the Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. The refreshed CEAP proposes to use the timeline of the Corporate Plan, 2024-2027, and has actions set for this time frame.
- 1.3** The Climate Emergency Working Group (CEWG), a cross-party group comprising seven members, have, using their experience and expertise, guided and directed the content of the document. In line with the Cabinet's approval (15 November 2023) to establish the group, they will be involved with monitoring the progress of the delivery of actions moving forward. The members of the CEWG group are outlined below:
 - Councillor Alison Johnston (Chair of CEWG and Portfolio Holder for Climate Emergency and Countryside)
 - Councillor Neil Gwynne (Leader of Liberal Democrats)
 - Councillor Stewart MacDonald (Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
 - Councillor Nick Lodge (Corporate Portfolio Holder)
 - Councillor Mark Cooper
 - Councillor Luigi Gregori (Overview and Scrutiny member)
 - Councillor Susanne Hasselmann (Overview and Scrutiny member)

2 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan for the period 2023-27 (A Place for Everyone – Supporting our communities to thrive) was approved by Council in April 2023. The Corporate Plan is one of the key documents that forms the Council's policy framework, setting out strategic priorities and the overarching strategic plans for the Council.
- 2.2 The year 2 Corporate Action Plan includes an item relating to the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. As part of this it was indicated that there would be a focus on a number of items including updating the CEAP, with support from the Climate Emergency Working Group.

3 Climate Emergency Action Plan Refresh Document

- 3.1 Since the production of the original CEAP in 2020, the Council have made progress in reducing our emissions, including transitioning from diesel to HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) fuel amongst our fleet vehicles; decarbonising council assets and through working with communities and businesses to reduce borough wide emissions. It is recognised that our communities play a leading role in emissions reduction and there are opportunities to do more to ensure this progress continues.
- 3.2 The CEWG have shaped the direction and content of the CEAP, which has taken account of the progress in delivering the current CEAP, as well as other sources of information. The processes undertaken to deliver a refreshed document comprised five intensive meetings with the CEWG over a period of 6 months. The discussions included consideration of the scope and structure of the document, the different roles of the council and the influence it has, and the approach to the actions.
- 3.3 The emerging document focuses in on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving resilience to the effects of climate change, both for the Council and supporting such actions, along with other parties, for the borough. The CEWG considered this focused remit as important to the momentum and a proactive approach on climate action, rather than a broader scope on wider environmental issues. However, the strong links with wider environmental and other issues are recognise, as summarised through the consideration of co-benefits. There are also likely to be other strategies and policies that will be relevant to some of these other topics, such as the forthcoming Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 3.4 The proposed document sets out a series of objectives that reflects the scope of the document, as well as trying to be more explicit of the different means through which the Council can play a role in taking action on the climate emergency, and how this differs for different matters. For example, while transport sector emissions are a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the borough, Hampshire County Council is the highway authority.

4 Proposed Approach to Actions

- 4.1 The emerging CEAP includes a comprehensive set of actions, designed to drive forward carbon reduction activity. As far as possible, the actions have timescales or milestones for delivery and are quantifiable to enable us to measure the impact on greenhouse gases over the next three years.
- 4.2 The CEWG provided a steer and feedback on the proposed actions and how they are presented so as to be clearer on how this relates to the level of influence the Council would have (e.g. direct control to awareness & education) and whether they were more likely to influence the Council's greenhouse gas emissions or those for the area.
- 4.3 The three tables have been presented - table 1 looks at those specific to the council's emissions, table 2 covers actions that affect emissions external to the council, and table 3 looks at actions focused on engagement, awareness and communication. The CEWG raised the importance of actions being framed to be specific and measurable to aid in monitoring – both in terms of the degree to which the action has been progressed relative to the expected timeline and the impact of the actions. This has not been possible for all actions, some of which are ongoing in nature. Additionally, some actions are investigative, therefore the outcome of such work should enable a clearer direction on next steps (e.g. the most effective approach to decarbonising certain Council assets) Although it is not possible to record a specific impact with the actions in table 3, the CEWG noted it is important to highlight where engagement and communication can help in changing habits, helping with wider emissions reduction and adaptation to climate change.
- 4.4 The CEWG sought the addition of a range of actions, including improving the quality of data we have access to, a specific action on exploring the creation of a climate emergency focused community grant, looking at options for carbon sequestration from the Council's assets, actions relating to our role in promoting and facilitating more active and sustainable travel, and actions about how we work with partners including in relation to climate resilience.
- 4.5 During the lifespan of the CEAP, additional actions may be identified. When these opportunities arise, they will be considered and responded to and then reflected within the resultant activities and reporting.

5 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 5.1 As presented to the Committee in October 2023, the Council have reported on its greenhouse gas emissions for the majority of buildings that are Council owned and operated, as well as the fuel used in running the fleet vehicles and smaller machinery.
- 5.2 The CEAP provided the baseline position as at 2018/19 using the measure of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

- 5.3 The Council reports on scope 1 and 2 emissions, but not scope 3¹ as it is currently not possible to report on these emissions due to the availability of appropriate data. Where possible, actions to reduce scope 3 emissions will be identified, even if it is not possible to measure their impact.
- 5.4 Based on available information, an estimated trajectory of emissions from 2023/24 to 2026/27 has been proposed. This will be kept under review as we move through the lifespan of the document.
- 5.5 The greenhouse gas emissions for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 are currently being calculated, which will be shared with the CEWG before being published on the website.
- 5.6 Figure 3 in section 5.5 of the CEAP (appended to this report) has been included to outline the Council's proposed net emissions looking forward to 2026/27. The solid grey bars indicate figures from data that has previously been reported. The dashed grey bars outline an emissions trajectory from assumptions made based on the proposed actions. For context, the drop from 2022/23 to 2023/24 is largely a result of transition to HVO fuel within our fleet.
- 5.7 Figure 4 seeks to estimate the impact of the Council's tree planting on net greenhouse gas emissions. The section of the bars indicated in dashed green outlines the potential reduction in emissions as a result of carbon sequestration calculations. The total height of the trajectory figures is the same as the projections in Figure 3, however, the green bar now outlines the estimated emissions that would be reduced as a result of the tree planting, leaving the grey dashed figure as the remainder of the trajectory figure if this was to be applied.
- 5.8 Figure 5 focuses in on the trajectory years and has been presented as a line graph to make the relationship between the Council's projected greenhouse gas emissions and the implications of the tree planting clearer.
- 5.9 There have been assumptions made for this calculation, in part reflecting that carbon sequestration calculation is a new science. The assumptions made include:
- Tree planting undertaken within 2021/22 finished at the end of March 2022. Therefore, it has been assumed that there is no impact on carbon sequestration in that year. Therefore, the calculation was started for 2022/23 and is the reason the first green dash starts within this year on the graph in Figure 2 in the CEAP. This approach is repeated for subsequent years.
 - All standard trees survive and there will be a 10% failure for the whips planted, every year, for three years.

¹ Definitions for these terms are set out within the draft CEAP, appended to this report.

- It does not differentiate the rate of carbon sequestration for tree types, species or conditions and both whips and standard trees are assumed to sequester an average of 10kg of carbon per year for the first 20 years.

5.10 As the science develops, the calculations will be kept under review.

6 Monitoring and Reporting

6.1 The Council will continually monitor and evaluate the progress of this action plan against the intended outcomes, and review and refine it based on lessons learnt. This will include monitoring the greenhouse gas emissions and progress on delivering the actions. This will be documented through an annual progress report, to include the metrics and qualitative updates associated with the delivery of the actions. This report would be prepared with input from the Climate Emergency Working Group (in line with the terms of reference) and presented to Cabinet.

6.2 Any additional information or relevant updates will also be provided through this monitoring approach, such as any additional opportunities that may arise within the three years of this plan. For example, even though the actions are set to be completed within the next three years, other opportunities may arise that can be included within the actions plan during this time. This could refer to council emissions, external actions or working with community groups. This is to make sure that work is undertaken in line with the climate emergency and the changes required to adapt to it.

6.3 The CEAP will continue to be reviewed in line with the cycles of the preparation of Corporate Plan.

7 Conclusion

7.1 This report sets out the work of the Climate Emergency Working Group to create the refreshed CEAP. This new version will replace the current CEAP and guide the Council's approach to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change over the next three years.

7.2 The Committee is asked to note and endorse the content of the report and the draft Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

[Corporate Plan](#)

[Corporate Action Plan – Year 2](#)

[Climate Emergency Action Plan \(2020\)](#)

Confidentiality

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.

ANNEX 1

No of Annexes:	1		
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