

Climate Emergency Action Plan

Report of the Environmental Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

1. That the Climate Emergency Action Plan (Annex 1 to the report) be approved.
2. That the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, in consultation with the Environment Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make changes of a minor nature to improve the presentation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and correct typographical errors prior to publication.

SUMMARY:

- The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- The Action Plan has been prepared and endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in line with the resolution of the Council on 4 September 2019.
- It is proposed that the Action Plan is considered as a living document, with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being the forum for formally monitoring progress.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the draft Climate Emergency Action Plan. This is the culmination of work undertaken by the cross party member and officer groups since September 2019.

2 Background

- 2.1 In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)¹ issued a special report in relation to global warming. This highlighted the latest understanding on global warming and a need for urgent action. Following this, a number of local authorities started declaring climate emergencies, reflecting the need for action at all scales. The Climate Change Act 2008 was also amended in June 2019, seeking a reduction in the United Kingdom's carbon emissions by 100% by 2050.
- 2.2 The Council declared a climate emergency on 4 September 2019. The Council also committed to '*investigating clear and effective options to become a carbon-neutral organisation*'. In addition, it was resolved that '*the Council work with our communities and partners to identify opportunities for making the Borough carbon neutral*'.

¹ UN body for assessing science in relation to climate change.

- 2.3 In order to deliver on these matters, the Council invited the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to '*establish a cross party working group comprising Council Officers and Members (including the Environmental Portfolio Holder), with a remit to draw together the existing work of the Council in reducing the impacts of climate change and develop an action plan that identifies the steps the Council can take to achieve carbon neutrality as quickly as possible*'. It was required that the working group provide their draft recommendations within six months. This report presents the outputs of that process.
- 2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSCOM) established seven cross party member / officer work streams to help develop the draft action plan. These were:
- Digital and smart working
 - Premises and Asset Management
 - Transport, Fleet and Plant
 - Reducing, reusing, recycling
 - Enhancing the natural environment
 - Working with communities and businesses
 - Infrastructure & built environment
- 2.5 All members, not just those on OSCOM, had the opportunity to be part of the work streams. They, along with officers, provided their own experiences and knowledge and explored existing practices and future possibilities. The officer involvement was multi-disciplinary and helped to identify processes and projects already implemented by the Council to reduce emissions. This confirmed that the Council was not 'starting from scratch'.
- 2.6 An OSCOM round table discussion was held on 19 February to collate and share insights of the activities of the work streams. Following on from this, OSCOM endorsed the draft Climate Emergency Action Plan on 18 March, Annex 2 reflect the Minutes.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 The thread of tackling climate change runs implicitly through many of the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2023 'Growing Our Potential'. At its centre is our commitment to place-based working and enabling our communities to tackle the issues that are most important to them. This sets the context for working with our communities and partners to learn and share their ideas for tackling climate change.
- 3.2 The Action Plan also aligns with the objectives set out within the Council's Sustainability Framework (2017), including in relation to continuing to look at ways to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 A specific element of the Council motion highlighted engaging with others to share experiences and learning. As part of drafting the Action Plan the 'working with communities and businesses' work stream has spoken to and shared ideas with parish councils and other organisations. These conversations will continue both through the climate emergency and other forums, such as Romsey Future and Andover Vision. Comments submitted to the Council have also been taken into account.

- 4.2 As indicated in section 2 of this report, the actions were identified through seven cross party member / officer work streams that were established by OSCOM. All members had the opportunity to be part of the work streams. Some of those involved in this process were not aware of some of the activities already undertaken by the Council. In order to ensure greater awareness of delivery of actions and progress in the future, advice will need to be sought from the Council's communications team.

5 Climate Emergency Action Plan

- 5.1 In the relatively short window, OSCOM has been able to co-ordinate the preparation of a draft Action Plan which will move the Council towards being a carbon neutral organisation. The proposed actions are grouped into seven themes, including those for both implementation and further investigation. The actions listed goes beyond 'business as usual'. Certain actions are already in train but some will rely on behavioural change as well as a shift in national policy or improvements in technology to enable the action to be achieved.
- 5.2 The actions have been put into short, medium and long term tranches, based on when work on the actions will commence. What is meant by the time frames will differ depending on the theme and action. In some circumstances the actions do not fall within a particular timeframe but have commenced and will continue throughout the life of Action Plan.
- 5.3 Priority actions have also been identified within the Action Plan. This is not to indicate the importance of actions but reflects where current resources are to be focussed.
- 5.4 In identifying the action, the work streams have understood the challenge that the Council faces. Opinion nationally remains divided on the pace required to meet this emergency, the impact certain measures will have, and the reliance on technologies some of which are in their infancy. This has led to variations in the approaches of different organisations on the best ways to reach carbon neutrality and over what timescale. There does not appear to be a common definition or approach at present.
- 5.5 As the actions have emerged from the work streams, it has been identified that baseline information is available for some elements but not all. A greater understanding of the current picture is required. At this stage, the work of OSCOM has identified the challenges and the way forward without a specific target being established but still demonstrating their ambition.
- 5.6 The ability of organisations to meet targets, especially those with a short timescales, depend on a number of variables e.g. the scope of their responsibilities and function; the geography of the area they cover; and their assets. This serves to highlight the lack of common definition or approach and that direct comparison should not be undertaken. Each organisation is different.
- 5.7 There is a recognition that there will be a need for offsetting (e.g. increasing tree planting) to achieve carbon neutrality. This will be particularly relevant for a rural Council and given the services the Council provides. This is contained in the Action Plan.

- 5.8 To really achieve carbon neutrality there does need to be a system change at all levels of government and within all sectors of the community. This Action Plan begins to do that. There has been a rapid change in technology, behaviour and government policy over the last 18-24 months to the extent that the time frames and priorities for actions will change. As such, the Action Plan will need to be considered a 'living' document. This evolving picture will only make achieving carbon neutrality more likely and give the Council the opportunity to establish targets with the potential to exceed those set by Government and Hampshire County Council of carbon neutrality by 2050.
- 5.9 As a result of the COVID 19 Pandemic the Council has had to adapt how the organisation runs and how it continues to serve the community. Some of the measures put in place align with the actions within the Action Plan (e.g. home working, virtual meetings). As the Council moves to a post COVID 19 recovery phase there will be opportunities to co-ordinate with the Climate Emergency Action Plan particularly with regard to reviewing time frames and priorities or identify new actions.
- 5.10 The Council will need to monitor and report on the Action Plan's progress, as well as having the opportunity to identify new and updated actions. Whilst the preparation of the Action Plan has been undertaken by OSCOM, member involvement has gone beyond the OSCOM membership. It is proposed that OSCOM continues to be the forum for formally monitoring progress with reports produced every 6 months. This will be the opportunity to highlight and propose new actions. An annual OSCOM sponsored workshop to discuss progress and the proposed new ideas that have been put forward will be held prior to reporting any changes to the Action Plan to Council. There would also be opportunity for the operational delivery of the actions to be monitored as part of the Council's established performance management arrangements as well as linking to the Corporate Action Plan monitoring process.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 An evaluation of the risks has been undertaken. Whilst risks of a medium priority were identified, controls have been put in place resulting in no significant risks being outstanding.

7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 Where the actions require a change in work practices they may also require additional resources to implement. It is too premature to estimate the level of resources required (both financial and officer time). This can only be properly gauged once the individual action is considered in more detail.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There is no legal obligation to prepare a Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Council will act in accordance with legal obligations in relation to climate change matters, whilst having regard to other legislative requirements when implementing the actions.

9 Equality Issues

- 9.1 The EQIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken. Equalities issues will be taken into account through any more detailed consideration of the implementation of actions.

10 Other Issues

- 10.1 Community Safety – None directly relating to the Action Plan.
- 10.2 Environmental Health Issues – None directly relating to the Action Plan.
- 10.3 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate – The Action Plan is intended to be a living document that sets out the steps the Council will be taking to become a carbon-neutral organisation and support our communities and partners in identifying opportunities for making the Borough carbon neutral. In delivering the actions, the Council will have regard to wider sustainability considerations.
- 10.4 Property Issues – A number of the actions relate to the way we manage our land and property, so as to reduce our energy consumption. The Premise and Asset Management team have been involved in the preparation of the Action Plan. Assessment of the implication for property will be given when each action is considered in more detail.
- 10.5 Wards/Communities Affected - All

11 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 11.1 Following the declaration of a climate emergency in September 2019, a Climate Emergency Action Plan has been prepared for consideration by the Council. This will be a living document that needs to be updated to ensure it helps move us towards being a carbon-neutral organisation.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<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:	2	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Environmental) Councillor A Johnston			
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Report to:	Council	Date:	10 June 2020