

**CABINET**

**DATE OF MEETING: 5 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**TITLE OF REPORT: CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE**

**Report of: Corporate Strategy and Policy Development Manager**

**Cabinet member: Councillor Alan Oliver, Environment**

**I PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider the Council's response to recent evidence in relation to the implications of global warming including the national declaration of a climate change emergency.

**2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That Cabinet:

- A Recognises the serious impact of climate change globally and agrees that there is a need for urgent action; and
- B Agrees that a cross party Climate Change Member Working Group be established and that the Terms of Reference for that Group as set out in Appendix I be agreed in principle; and
- C That a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan led by the Member Working Group be prepared by January 2020 based on Hart District Council becoming a net zero carbon emitter by 2040 at the latest.

**3 BACKGROUND**

**National Policy**

- 3.1 In October 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported on the state of global warming. It warned that there is only a dozen years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. It also outlined that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society. Since this report increased focus has arisen from governments and interest groups on climate change and on carbon reduction.
- 3.2 In May 2019 a motion was passed by Government declaring a climate change emergency and since then many local authorities have followed suit. The Climate Change Act 2008 required the UK to reduce its carbon emissions by at least 80% by 2050. In May 2019, the Committee on Climate Change recommended a new emissions target for the UK: net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050. This was made a statutory target in June through the Climate Change Act (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.

### **Current Hart Policy**

- 3.3 The Council has previously provided support to mitigating the impacts of climate change through the Nottingham Declaration and in 2015 to the Local Government Association Climate Local Initiative and related Hampshire Climate Local Commitment. The Hart Corporate Plan does not specifically mention climate change although it does include relevant actions relating to improving energy efficiency and promoting a Clean Environment through the transition to a low carbon future and the efficient use of resources.
- 3.4 Other Council policies specifically mention climate change, including an Objective in the emerging Local Plan. The Draft Hart Vision 2040 specifically identifies action on climate change by building in sustainability and using new technologies to mitigate the impact of climate change. There is also a commitment to the development of a green grid which will encourage the use of more sustainable forms of travel as well as providing for biodiversity. The Council does not currently have any stated carbon reduction targets or a cohesive approach towards tackling climate change.

## **4 CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Current emissions**

- 4.1 Government statistics show the changes in per capita carbon dioxide emissions for each local authority<sup>1</sup>. This shows that in 2005 Hart produced 7.5 tonnes per capita and in 2017 this had reduced to 5.1 tonnes. This reduction is in line with other authorities and with Hampshire as a whole (5.0 tonnes). However, a number of Hampshire (and other) authorities have significantly lower figures, for example Gosport is at 2.7t, Havant at 3.5t and Rushmoor at 3.8t. If the UK is to meet its targets then carbon emissions need to be brought down to 2t per person. These statistics also suggest that transport is the greatest contributor in the District to these emissions.

### **Overview and Scrutiny**

- 4.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a draft of this Report at their meeting on 20 August. The Committee were supportive in principle of action on climate change. A number of detailed comments on the report have been responded to as set out below:
- Comments on the proposed measures set out in paragraph 4.7 of this report relating to improvements to waste management and recycling, to the impact on weather patterns, and to the value of offsetting were made. Whilst the measures listed in this paragraph are only examples of those that could be considered by the Member Working Group some amendments have been made to incorporate these issues.

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<sup>1</sup> UK local and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics 2005 – 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017> , June 2019

- Reference to the cross cutting implications of the climate change work across Council Services has been added along with the need to link with other on-going workstreams.
- Amendments have been made in response to comments that there was some mixed terminology relating to carbon neutral and zero net carbon targets.
- The Terms of Reference have been amended to separate out the Purpose and Objectives.

4.3 The following comments were also made but are considered issues for the Climate Change Member Working Group to consider:

- the extent to which the Strategy will focus on actions to be taken to ensure the Council becomes a net zero carbon emitter and actions that will influence carbon emissions in the wider community;
- the timescales for different elements of the work;
- the value and business case for some of the measures such as retrofitting of the Council offices or biodiversity offsetting;
- the setting of interim targets; and
- the precise reporting process back to Overview & Scrutiny.

#### **Potential Measures**

4.4 As a local authority, the District Council has an important role to play in both the way it manages its own assets and operations and in helping residents and businesses to capture the opportunities and benefits of action on climate change. This can include saving money on energy bills, generating income from renewable energy, attracting new jobs and investment in 'green' industries, supporting new sources of energy, managing local flood-risk and water scarcity and protecting our natural environment. The Council has a role as:

- Community leader – helping local people and businesses to be smarter about their energy use and to prepare for climate impacts;
- Service provider – delivering services that are resource efficient, less carbon intensive, resilient and that protect those who are most vulnerable to climate impacts;
- Estate manager – ensuring that our own buildings and operations are resource efficient, use clean energy, and are well prepared for the impacts of a changing climate.

4.5 The Council has already implemented policies and initiatives which help to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. These include energy efficiency improvements to the council offices through more energy efficient lighting, improved insulation and window sealing, the provision of trunking for electric vehicles in Church Road car park, increased recycling, reducing the use of single use plastics, wildflower

planting and biodiversity projects and the development of policies in the emerging Local Plan seeking for example, greater levels of energy and water efficiency. Any Climate Change Strategy will have potential implications across many aspects of the Council's work and will need to inform and be informed by, other projects being undertaken such as that on the Civic Campus regeneration.

4.6 The Council currently has no overall strategy for carbon reduction either for itself or in influencing the wider community, businesses and stakeholders. It is therefore proposed that a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is prepared. This would set out the measures needed for the Council to become a net zero carbon emitter. The Strategy would be accompanied by a clear action plan including costings and performance monitoring and reporting procedures.

4.7 The Strategy would be supported by a Member Working Group who would finalise the Terms of Reference and the scope of the project, for example in determining to what extent the Strategy would consider wider community measures outside of those which deliver the Councils own zero net carbon target. Subject to this, measures that could be considered through the Strategy include:

- Consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Councils activities;
- Identify clear Member and Officer leads;
- Consider the use of consultants to identify baseline emissions from each sector across the district to help inform future work;
- Sourcing of energy from zero carbon sources where feasible, through selection of energy supplier, renewable power purchase agreements and on-site generation, including identification of the scope for commercial renewable energy production;
- Working with partners on strengthening future waste management and recycling;
- Reflecting the effects of climate change on weather patterns and the impacts on planning decisions and other services such as Emergency Planning;
- Retrofitting offices and other owned properties to highest energy efficiency standards where practicable;
- Support and encourage sustainable transport across the district, including staff and councillors travel;
- Embed carbon reduction/energy efficiency into internal procurement process including possible Carbon Emission Appraisals;
- Extending the commitment to reduce single use plastics to other partners, for example through schemes such as the Plastic Free Community Status scheme run by the charity Surfers against Sewage<sup>2</sup>;
- Ensure all outsourced contractors have appropriate carbon reduction target written in to contracts;
- The value of offsetting any remaining carbon emission through carbon offset program, such as tree planting (whilst recognising ecological benefits of tree management on for example heathlands);
- Undertaking a process of Member and officer training on climate change;
- Considering a wider Climate Change forum with other stakeholders;

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-communities/>

- Identifying and publicising information, grants and other support for pro-actively encouraging climate change initiatives in businesses and local communities.

## **5 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Is the proposal identified in the service plan?	No
Is the proposed being funded from current budgets?	No
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for the proposal?	2 days a week

- 5.1 Appropriate resources will need to be identified to prepare the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Currently two days a week of a post in Environmental and Technical Services is budgeted for climate change work, although this has proven difficult to implement to date as much of this time has been spent on the Waste contract. The measures identified in the Strategy and Action Plan will be costed and if approved will need to be appropriately budgeted and resourced.

## **6 ACTION**

- 6.1 Subject to agreement to this Report, resources will need to be identified to support the Member Working Group in order to:
- Finalise the Terms of Reference;
  - Clarify the scope of the project;
  - Set a detailed work programme;
  - Identify resources;
  - Support preparation of the Strategy and Action Plan.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix I - Proposed Terms of Reference

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## Proposed Terms of Reference



### Climate Change Working Group Terms of Reference

#### 1. Purpose

The Climate Change Working Group is a forum for Members to explore issues of climate change.

#### 2. Objectives

The Working Group Objectives are:

- to understand the opportunities in delivering and setting a Council wide net zero carbon emission target;
- to identify the scope of and prepare, a costed Hart Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan by January 2020;
- to identify resources required to implement the Strategy and Action Plan;
- to set a regular (no less than annual) review and monitoring process.

#### 2. Membership

The Group is not required to be democratically representative of the current electoral membership of the Council but attendees will be:

- Portfolio Holder for Environment;
- One representative of the respective political groups;
- Group leaders of the political groups;
- Officer representation: Corporate Strategy and Policy Development Manager and/or the Head of Environmental and Technical Services and other officers as required.

The group is considered quorate if three Members are available. The Working Group will establish at its first meeting whether substitutions (where the above mentioned Members are not available) are to be accepted.

#### 3. Meetings

Meeting will be held broadly every month leading up to adoption of the Climate Change Strategy and then every two months once the Strategy is agreed, or ahead of key project deadlines/reporting timelines.

Any documents for consideration should be circulated to all participants **5 working days** in advance of the meeting.

#### **4. Reporting**

Minutes of the meetings will be reported to Cabinet and recommendations of the Working Group made to Cabinet for consideration and approval as appropriate.