

REPORT TO: CABINET OVERVIEW WORKING GROUP

DATE: 15 AUGUST 2019

TITLE: CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY – INITIAL REPORT

LEAD OFFICERS: SENIOR MANAGEMENT BOARD (01279) 446004

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RECOMMENDED that:

A The Working Group notes the report and the progress made to date.

BACKGROUND

1. The Climate Change Act 2008 established a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 per cent in 2050 from 1990 levels. In June 2019, the Government passed new laws to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.
2. The Council recognises the importance of reducing its carbon footprint and use of resources in both its own operations and across the district and how this contributes to government legislation. In 2011 the Council adopted its first Carbon Management Plan, achieving a 25 per cent reduction over five years from building and transport related emissions, totalling 1083 tonnes of carbon. The Council's Carbon Management Plan 2016-2021 set the Council a target to reduce its carbon emissions by 25 per cent from its 2014/15 baseline emissions of 2,700,000kg (2,700 tonnes), the equivalent to 675 tonnes. On 18 July 2019, Cabinet agreed to extend the Carbon Management Plan timeline to 2021/22, unless the target is reached prior to this date.
3. At the Full Council meeting of 11 July 2019, Councillors unanimously backed a motion to declare a climate emergency in Harlow. The Council has made a number of commitments to prevent climate change, including reducing the council's net carbon emissions as far as possible and reducing the carbon footprint at a greater rate than it is already committed to do so, along with actions relating the effects of activities, beyond those directly emitting carbon into the atmosphere, on the wider environment.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

4. It has been identified that the climate emergency motion can be divided into three main work streams: Property, Environment and Community Leadership. Specific actions identified as part of the climate emergency declaration include installing photovoltaic panels on all public council buildings within the next two years where possible and new council built houses having a minimal carbon footprint. Progress on these actions is already being made. This includes:
 - a) Updated feasibility studies for photovoltaic panel installation at Civic Centre, Latton Bush Centre, Playhouse and Mead Park Depot are being commissioned, along with new studies for Leah Manning and Harlow Museum (previous studies in 2011 found installation to be unfeasible on grounds of cost, but there has been sufficient reduction in manufacturing costs for panels to re-visit this); and
 - b) Officers actively exploring options to minimise the carbon footprint of properties within its house building programme - set to deliver 177 new homes by 2022/23 - including construction process. Such options include:
 - i) Installation of insulation levels in line with Passivhaus standards;
 - ii) Alternative heating solutions in line with Climate Change Committee recommendations;
 - iii) Methods of increasing biodiversity, including SuDS, at each site;
 - iv) Identifying and using 'green' materials with low/zero carbon footprint;
 - v) Methods of reducing fleet and plant emissions during the construction of each site; and
 - vi) Installation of electric car charge points at a rate of one per 20 homes for new developments
5. The climate emergency motion also includes the creation of an action plan which focuses on reducing the impact of day to day living on the environment beyond that caused by greenhouse gas emissions. A number of short, medium and long term proposals for consideration have been set out for each of the three climate emergency motion work streams in the tables below. These proposals are likely to form a part of any future climate emergency strategies to be devised, once appropriate appraisals of viability in terms of financial and environmental impact have been carried out.

Table 1 – Property Work Stream

Short Term (1-3 years)	Medium Term (3-5 years)	Long Term (5+ years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating the use of single use plastics across all public council buildings by January 2020 • Installing photovoltaic panels on all public council buildings within the next two years where possible • Identify other energy efficiency measures to reduce carbon emissions i.e LED Lighting, on site energy generation • Encourage staff to cycle to work and further promote the cycle to work scheme • Encourage the adoption of water efficiency measures across all Council operational/public buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure 100% renewable energy as part of energy supply contracts for electricity • Offset carbon emissions from gas consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging HTS (Property & Environment) Ltd to switch over to electric power vehicles, plant and machinery • Switch over Harlow Council fleet to electric vehicles • Encouraging Veolia to consider alternative vehicles/fuel for vehicles when collecting household waste • Harlow Council to consider procuring own electric vehicle car pool fleet for staff to use for work purposes

Table 2 – Environment Work Stream

Short Term (1-3 years)	Medium Term (3-5 years)	Long Term (5+ years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting 1,000 new trees and hedgerows across the town in the next year. • Devise further tree planting strategies for the medium to long term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the building of new carbon neutral Council housing/retrofitting of existing Council housing stock to be carbon neutral • Consider planting of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging HTS to source battery technology for its electric vehicles from companies who ensure environmentally friendly lithium mining techniques

	<p>wildflower verges to reduce emissions, promote health and wellbeing and increase biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of water fountains in public places that reduces the use of single use plastic water bottles 	
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Table 3 – Community Leadership Work Stream

Short Term (1-3 years)	Medium Term (3-5 years)	Long Term (5+ years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively promote schemes to encourage children to walk to school such as the Walking Bus initiative and WOW • Actively work with local stakeholders to reduce the use of single use plastics/single use items • Actively work with Public Health England to promote awareness of carbon emissions related to food production • Actively work with stakeholders and the public to promote the message of reducing waste • Work with community groups to promote and assist in tree planting schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirming the council's commitment to the Garden Town development's principles of sustainable transport. • Installing electric car charging points across all council car parks within the next five years where possible • Promoting the installation of electric car charging points in residential areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use/installation of SuDs on all large new builds in line with Planning Policy

IMPLICATIONS

Place (Includes Sustainability)

The proposals set out in this report demonstrate the Council's commitment to tackling climate change and will set some good practice standards in meeting the sustainability objectives set out in the emerging Local Development Plan.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Project Director – Enterprise Zone and Head of Environment and Planning

Finance (Includes ICT)

It is currently envisaged that the proposed projects will be funded in the main through the non-housing capital programme and that where scheme funding is not already allocated bids will be progressed as part of the capital programme refresh later in the appropriate financial year through the normal annual budget processes.

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Chief Executive

Housing

As outlined in the report. The Plan will support ongoing energy efficiency initiatives that contribute to client change and is resourced and is being delivered as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

None beyond those contained within the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

The proposals within the report are in line with the approved referral made to Cabinet Overview Working Group, via Cabinet, from Full Council on 11 July 2019. If measures are approved by Members then suitable KPIs could be introduced to ensure effective monitoring.

Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

LED – Light Emitting Diode

SuDS – Sustainable Drainage Systems

WoW – Walk on Wednesdays