

**REPORT TO:** CABINET POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

**DATE:** 10 MARCH 2022

**TITLE:** CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY – POSITION STATEMENT

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** COUNCILLOR ALASTAIR GUNN, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR GOVERNANCE

**LEAD OFFICER:** JANE GREER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT (01279) 446406

**CONTRIBUTING OFFICERS:** ALISON FOX REGENERATION PROJECTS MANAGER (01279) 446407

DEAN JAMES, OPERATIONS MANAGER (01279) 446687

MICHAEL PITT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT (01279) 446114

**This is not a Key Decision**  
**It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I013580**  
**Call-in Procedures may apply**  
**This decision will affect no ward specifically.**

**RECOMMENDED that it recommended to Cabinet that:**

- A** The Climate Change Strategy Position Statement, attached as Appendix A to the report, is approved.
- B** Following development as indicated in the position statement a draft climate change strategy “Next Steps to Net Zero: Climate Change Strategy” be presented to Cabinet in Autumn 2022.

**REASON FOR DECISION**

- A** Approving the position statement will communicate publicly the Council’s position on addressing climate change town wide, and give direction to development of the Council’s forthcoming Climate Change Strategy.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. The Council's work to manage its direct carbon footprint reduced its carbon emissions by 39 percent by 2021. The most easily achieved measures including switching energy suppliers having now been implemented, further reductions will present increasingly difficult challenges. Nonetheless the Council's current Carbon Reduction Plan for the periods 2021 to 2026 aims to reduce emissions by a further 15 percent.
2. Recognising the growing understanding of the urgency of addressing climate change issues, Full Council in July 2019 approved a motion declaring a Climate Change Emergency.
3. In September 2021, Cabinet set a target of achieving Net Zero by 2040 with a commitment to review this on an annual basis and seek to improve on this target where the development of carbon free technology permits. Further, Cabinet agreed to receive a further report to set out how the Council, in exercising its community leadership role, can bring forward a broader Climate Change Strategy for the town. To this end development "Next Steps to Net Zero: Climate Change Strategy" has been put in hand.

## **REVIEW OF CURRENT POSITION**

4. Since September 2021, Officers have been working to scope out the potential wider Climate Change Strategy for the town and to understand the current position of the town's carbon emissions. This has included establishing what carbon emissions baseline data is known and where further research is required to gain a fuller understanding of how we can plan to achieve the target of Net Zero by 2040 across all Council services and for the town as a whole.
5. The following seven key objectives for the Climate Strategy have been identified:
  - a) To achieve Net Zero emissions from the Council's operational buildings, land, vehicles and services, including those provided by service delivery partners;
  - b) To achieve Net Zero emissions from all homes and the built environment within Harlow;
  - c) To reduce consumption of resources, reduce waste and increase reuse and recycling in Harlow;
  - d) To adopt good stewardship of the natural environment across the town to support both climate change adaptation and mitigation;
  - e) To achieve a significant modal shift towards more sustainable means of transport;

- f) To promote reduction of emissions by businesses to Net Zero, supported by a successful green economy; and
  - g) To lead and encourage local communities, partners and stakeholders to reduce their emissions and contribute positively to meeting the challenges posed by climate change
6. A Position Statement has been produced that summarises the current activities that are being taken to support each objective and identifies the main challenges to meeting the Net Zero target by 2040.
  7. The Position Statement provides a sound basis from which to develop the Climate Change Strategy. It identifies areas of work that need further investigation and development as well as demonstrating the range of issues that the Council must address to achieve the Net Zero target.

## **NEXT STEPS**

8. The strategy will seek to define the challenges associated with achieving Net Zero by 2040. In many cases, establishing relevant baselines will inform target setting within each work strand to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2040. Work is currently progressing within the Council and with key partners to identify and understand data sources.
9. With the necessary targets set, work to identify resource requirements and ordering of priorities across Council services can take place.
10. The issues outlined in the Position Statement are unlikely to form a complete and exhaustive list as it is acknowledged that the Council is likely to learn on the journey to Net Zero, and where necessary review and revise its approach.
11. It is anticipated that the Climate Change Strategy will be developed for presentation to Cabinet in Autumn 2022.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Strategic Growth and Regeneration**

The development of a corporate climate change strategy will reinforce and extend commitments made by the Council in adopting an updated Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and endorsing the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town's Sustainability Guidance. It is expected that the further development of the Climate Change Strategy will identify ways in which these existing policies can be extended further.

**Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration**

### **Finance**

The delivery of any future actions will require both capital and revenue investments and, whilst some external support may be available in the form of grants

to help deliver the schemes, there will inevitably be a requirement for the council to consider the financial resources required when setting its future medium term financial strategies.

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

### **Housing**

As contained in the report.

**Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing**

### **Communities and Environment**

As contained in the report.

**Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment**

### **Governance and Corporate Services**

As contained in the report.

**Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Services**

### **Appendices**

Appendix A - Harlow Council Climate Change Strategy – Position Statement March 2022

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

None.