

Agenda Item 43.

TITLE	Declaring a Climate Emergency
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 18 September 2019
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Support the council, residents and businesses in working together to reduce carbon emissions across the borough avoid the negative impact of climate change.

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee endorses the work underway by the council in declaring a climate emergency with the objective of achieving zero carbon emissions by 2030. Including the development of a climate emergency action plan, running a cross party climate emergency steering group and establishing the borough's carbon footprint.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Following international reports that the planet is in a state of Climate Emergency, local councils across the country have been Declaring a Climate Emergency, showing their support for Climate Change initiatives and reducing emissions. On 18th July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council joined this movement, declaring a Climate Emergency and setting a target of 2030 for the council to become carbon-neutral.

Background

On the 8th October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report on the state of the climate. The report warned that there is a limited time frame in which to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5C after which there will be disastrous consequences, including loss of coral reefs, increased flooding and serious heatwaves. The report went on to state that if the planet warmed by 2C, the impacts would be catastrophic. At present, the planet is heading for 3-4C warming, so radical changes are needed in order to reduce emissions as quickly as possible.

In November 2018, Manchester and Bristol councils both passed motions Declaring a Climate Emergency, which set targets for becoming carbon-neutral. Since then, councils across the UK have been following in their footsteps. In May 2019, the UK Parliament unanimously approved a non-binding motion declaring a Climate Emergency, calling on the government to set more ambitious targets for reaching net-zero emissions.

On the 18th July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency, by tabling a motion submitted by Council Leader, Cllr. John Halsall. The motion received unanimous support and seeks to make Wokingham Borough carbon-neutral by 2030.

Cllr. Gregor Murray has been appointed as the Executive Member for Climate Emergency.

Analysis of Issues

Declaring a Climate Emergency

For a Council to have been considered to have 'declared a climate emergency', they must have tabled a motion with their intention to do so at a Council meeting setting out a target date to become carbon neutral.

Within six months of declaring a climate emergency councils must also have developed a Climate Emergency Action Plan setting out how they propose to achieve this target and set a up a steering group to monitor progress against the plan.

The Next Steps in Declaring Climate Emergency

Wokingham Borough Council have successfully declared a climate emergency by tabling a motion at Council and are now in the process of developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan. This involves working with every department of the council, as well as engaging with members, residents, businesses and schools to explore how we might achieve our target of achieving a carbon neutral borough by 2030. A number of sub-groups are involved in delivering outcomes. The Green Team is an officer group working to promote a raft of officer led behaviour changes. There is a communications plan to ensure to that we promote our successes and children's services are engaging with young people in the borough. Other departments including transport, waste recycling, planning policy and the council's energy team are all working together to create the action plan.

The Action Plan will explore all methods to reduce carbon emissions, including ways to generate renewable energy, carbon offsetting through tree planting and the application of new and emerging technologies.

The action plan will initially prioritise more achievable activities that we can be delivered quickly and phase some of the more challenging actions that will need more time to plan and implement later in the programme. As the council will be leading by example in cutting carbon emissions it will be prioritising work on its own estate.

Initially, we are establishing the council's carbon footprint to create a baseline from which we can measure progress. All initiatives in the action plan will be measured in terms of the carbon savings. The council's progress against reducing its carbon footprint will be reported annually.

A cross party steering group has been set up to monitor progress and support the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The completed Climate Emergency Action Plan will be taken to Council in January 2020

The council is in the process of recruiting a Climate Emergency Strategy and Commissioning officer to help the council develop and deliver the climate emergency action plan.

What the Council is Already Doing to Reduce Carbon Emissions.

The council is already doing a lot work to reduce its carbon emissions:

The council currently has a 25% target for procurement of green energy – that is energy generated from renewable sources.

Where it is practicable to do so the council is installing solar panels on council buildings. In total, the council has 31 solar sites of varying scale. Over 15 council sites have had minor energy reduction measures installed saving over £15,000 in energy bills over the past 2 years.

The council is investing in leading edge green technology by installing the most energy efficient plant and equipment in council buildings. Low energy lighting has been fitted in over 30% of council buildings, which has saved an estimated 11% in energy consumption. Insulation has been installed in over 20 council buildings, saving over 3% in energy consumption

Enabling and encouraging more sustainable travel through enhancing pedestrian, cycle and bus routes. 'My Journey Wokingham' is a borough-wide sustainable travel campaign that aims to help and inspire Wokingham residents to travel by alternative modes. There is also a 'Greenway Project' which aims to deliver a sustainable transport network which provides traffic-free commuting and leisure routes connecting new Strategic Development Locations with the existing settlements.

The council is also encouraging Increasing recycling and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. As part of council plans to recycle at least 50% of all household waste by

the end of 2020, residents have been recycling food waste since April 2019. 30% of all waste sent to landfill can be recycled in food waste collections (10,000 tonnes pa).

There are many more initiatives being carried out by the council itself and with other partners and stakeholders which will form a basis on which we can build to achieve a carbon neutral borough by 2030

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£25,000	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£50,000	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£50,000	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Current additional costs are for the post of a Climate Emergency Strategy and Commissioning officer to help the council develop and deliver the climate emergency action plan.

Where there is investment to reduce carbon emissions over and above existing activity financial investment may be required. Much of this might be secured from income generated through selling any renewable energy produced and savings from reduced energy usage. Other funding will be sought where possible including grant funding.

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Public Sector Equality Duty

Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers

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