

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 22 November 2021

Report to Cabinet 24 November 2021

Climate Emergency Action Plan

Report of the Head of Economy and Planning – *PES/390*

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report requests Cabinet to approve in principle the Climate Emergency Action Plan. This will enable the Council to reduce the carbon emissions generated by its activities in line with the commitments made in the Climate Emergency Declaration by Full Council in July 2019.
- 1.2. The Climate Emergency Action Plan outlines a set of proposals as to how the Council will reduce its carbon emissions by at least 45% by 2030 and to zero by 2050 as recommended by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider the report and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

- 2.2. To the Cabinet

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Approve the 'Core Principles for Action' document (Appendix A) which underpins the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- b) Approve the Climate Emergency Action Plan delivery programme for 2022/23 (Appendix B), to enable the council to start delivery of the carbon reduction measures identified.
- c) Approve in principle the overall Climate Emergency Action Plan to 2030 (Appendix B) to enable the council to reduce the carbon emissions generated by its activities by at least 45% by 2030 and to zero by 2050, subject to consideration next year of a full funding plan being developed for continued delivery from 2023/24.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1. In July 2019, Full Council declared a Climate Emergency and made a commitment to reduce the council's carbon emissions by at least 45% by 2030 and to zero by 2050.

- 3.2. The Council believes that all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown; and has committed to aim for zero carbon emissions as soon as possible and, in doing so, to show leadership and encourage local residents, stakeholders and businesses to do the same.
- 3.3. The Council has recognised that as a society we are now beyond taking small measures while generally carrying on with 'business as usual'. Deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions are needed quickly to stabilise rising temperatures alongside rethinking agriculture and land use to restore ecosystems. This will impact on all aspects of our lives.
- 3.4. Decisions made across national, regional and local authorities now will determine whether or not we are subject to catastrophic climate and ecological impacts or can transition to a stable and sustainable world. Although these decisions have to be taken at all levels of society, they need to be taken significantly by local authorities like the council, which has a critical lead role to play in driving down carbon emissions at the local level.
- 3.5. The Climate Emergency Action Plan outlines the actions the Council needs to set in motion now in order to deliver on this commitment.

4. Background

- 4.1. As part of the Climate Emergency Declaration, the Full Council asked the Overview and Scrutiny Commission (OSC) to convene a Scrutiny Panel to look into and make recommendations focusing upon the workings and activities of Crawley Borough Council relating to carbon emissions and to report to Council as soon as was practicable.
- 4.2. A Scrutiny Panel was subsequently set up by the OSC in September 2019 to take the work forward with the Panel meeting from November 2019 to October 2020. The Scrutiny Panel reported back to OSC and Cabinet in February 2021 with a comprehensive list of recommendations on the four main themes of transport, commercial and business, blue and green infrastructure and domestic buildings.
- 4.3. The Scrutiny Panel asked that the officer-led Climate Emergency Advisory Group creates a Climate Emergency Action Plan for the council, taking into account the Scrutiny Panel's views and recommendations. This Action Plan should identify resources, sources of funding and timescales required for completion in order to ensure the council remains on target to reduce carbon emissions generated by council activities by at least 45% by 2030 and to zero by 2050.

5. Description of Issue to be Resolved

- 5.1. It is very clear that the effects of global heating arising from human activity are being felt throughout the world and these effects are gathering momentum. Fires, storms, high temperatures and floods are hitting communities across continents. The effects can be direct, where extreme weather events result in loss of life, homes and services, and indirect, where global supply chains are interrupted impacting vital supplies of food and other resources.
- 5.2. Whilst impacts are being increasingly reported in the northern hemisphere, communities in the global south are suffering more comprehensively as, in particular, water levels rise, and droughts drive land loss and migration.

- 5.3. The UK is experiencing more extreme weather with increased flooding, as seen recently in London and the South East, and droughts, together with more frequent heatwaves.
- 5.4. Following publication of the recent key 2021 IPCC report on the science of climate change, the head of the UN has described the world as on 'Code Red for humanity'.
- 5.5. It is only through recognising the scale of the challenge and forging ahead with deep cuts in carbon emissions that we can hope to stabilise rising temperatures and change course to a brighter and sustainable future.
- 5.6. The Climate Emergency Action plan sets out the steps the council needs to take to play its part in delivering the change needed.

6. Information & Analysis Supporting Recommendation

- 6.1. Through the Climate Emergency Declaration, the council has recognised it needs to decarbonise. This means that the town and the council will need to move away from using fossil fuels and cut carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that generate climate heating. Whilst Crawley Borough Council is clearly not responsible for all of the town's greenhouse gas emissions, it has significant emissions from its own activity and must reduce these at least in line with the targets. It is also in a position to influence and encourage others to do the same and must be seen to be taking a lead.
- 6.2. In order to identify and quantify the sources of the council's greenhouse gas emissions consultants, Anthesis, were commissioned to assess council energy and emissions data, much drawn from previous work undertaken by the Sustainability Team, and to provide a report to guide council action.
- 6.3. The Scrutiny Panel approved this report and the establishment of the Climate Emergency Advisory Group to draft the Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Group is drawn from varied staff across most council services to identify relevant activity and potential changes. The Action Plan aims to address the Council's own emissions, identifying current and planned activity and where further action must be taken. It also points the way to influencing and encouraging the wider community to take action too.
- 6.4. Experience, both within the council and elsewhere, shows that leadership, organisational culture and good communications have as much a part to play as the technical requirements, in effecting the major changes needed to address the climate emergency.
- 6.5. The Action Plan reflects this and establishes governance, with a Climate Emergency Board of senior managers, chaired by the CEO, to agree and guide proposals through authority requirements and maintain accountability. The Board is also an important group for influencing bodies beyond the council at a decision-making level.
- 6.6. A report on progress toward decarbonisation will be taken to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and then Cabinet every six months.
- 6.7. The officer Climate Emergency Advisory Group will continue to plan and champion activity on the climate and ecological emergency across the council.
- 6.8. Delivering carbon reduction and ecological improvement will need to be embedded across council services, including within existing budgets where possible. It is

important that key services to residents are protected and the response to the emergency is firstly a change of approach. Wider projects will require external funding. Accountability and reporting will be embedded within normal corporate decision-making rather than separately.

- 6.9. To normalise climate and ecological thinking within the council organisation will need development of staff 'carbon literacy' and skills. An engagement and training programme for staff is included in the Action Plan. This will require good, ongoing communications for all parts of the organisation and to keep the wider external business and resident community informed of our progress and opportunities for involvement.
- 6.10. Core principles for action on carbon reduction, based on the recommendations in the Anthesis report and wider climate and ecological evidence, underpin the Action Plan. The Principles identify key areas for action and explain the approach needed for each area. These are:
 - Energy – demand reduction & low carbon heat and cooling
 - Renewable Energy & Storage
 - Low carbon transport – demand reduction & transition to low carbon modes
 - Waste & Water – reduction (linked to procurement), recognising the hierarchy of practice.
 - Procurement - supply chain tracing to minimise and reuse, develop 'closed loops' and sustainable sourcing for products and services
 - Green & Blue Infrastructure – natural systems for biodiversity and carbon stores.
- 6.11. The Core principles for action are explored in more detail in Appendix A.
- 6.12. The Action Plan (in Appendix B) addresses each of these areas largely by undertaking investigations, audits and plans in the first year through 2022/23 and targeting measures in the following years aimed at maximising impact and optimising resource use.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. The delivery programme for 2022/23 will be delivered within existing budgets and resources.
- 7.2. It is not currently possible to fully understand the financial requirements to deliver the plan over the remaining years to 2030. For many of the actions, the council will need to carry out further feasibility work and studies first to develop a more detailed plan, for example:
 - To understand the costs to deliver deep retrofits of council owned buildings for energy efficiency and decarbonised heat source, detailed building audits will need to be carried out first.
 - To deliver on the commitment to stop the use of biocides (glyphosate), the council will need to develop new work methods and systems for weed control, in order to understand the resource (staff and cost) implications.
- 7.3. This enabling work during 2022/23 will feed into the development of a full funding plan for delivery of the Action Plan over subsequent years.
- 7.4. This enabling work will also position the council to be ready to attract partnership funding, for example the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund for public building retrofits. When these funding opportunities are announced, timescales for applying

are always tight, and the council needs to be ready with 'shovel-ready' projects in order to lever in this type of resource.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1 The Council must have regard to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The public sector equality duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:
- a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under that Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and,
 - c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it, which involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:-
 - (i) tackle prejudice; and,
 - (ii) promote understanding.
- 8.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and does not identify any action that needs to be taken as a result of the plan. Any changes to service delivery that result from implementing the Action Plan may themselves need to be assessed separately for their impact on people with protected characteristics, and at this stage a separate EIA may be required.
- 8.3 The EIA is attached as Appendix C.

Report author and contact officer:

Louise Skipton-Carter
Sustainability Manager
louise.skipton-carter@ Crawley.gov.uk