

**CABINET
28 JANUARY 2020**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2020 -2025

REPORT OF THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITY: ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT / RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT*

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report proposes a refreshed Climate Change strategy for adoption

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That Cabinet review and approve the amended Climate Change Strategy and accompanying appendices, which sets out the Council's strategic priorities to reduce the organisation's impact on the environment.

2.2. That Cabinet adopt the following documents:

- Appendix 1 Climate Change Strategy 2020 -2025
- Appendix A – Completed Actions
- Appendix B – Proposed Actions

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 In 2019, the Council passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency, in this motion the Council pledged their commitment to achieve a target of zero carbon emissions by 2030. The revised strategy sets out how the council will do this.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 The discussions at the recently formed Cabinet Panel for the Environment have been taken into consideration in the renewal of the Strategy. As part of the approval of the Council plan, the proposed and completed actions, contained within the appendices, have been agreed by the Senior Management Team and Executive members.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 1 November 2019.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Climate action has been a long term corporate priority area for NHDC, and it is currently pursued through the new objective to *Respond to Challenges to the Environment*. The warming of the earth brings milder and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, more intense downpours and more frequent and intense flooding for North Hertfordshire. These changes pose great risk to the Council's service delivery. In accordance with this, the Council will continue to provide a clean and safe environment, in consultation and partnership with local people. We will continue to protect the natural and built-up environments and address the impacts of the climate emergency; in our approach to waste and recycling, food hygiene, environmental crime and the management of air quality areas.
- 7.2 Over the last thirteen years the Council has worked continuously to reduce our waste, reduce our CO₂ emissions and improve energy efficiency across the district. In 2007 we signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. In 2009 we published our original Climate Change Strategy, which we updated in 2013. Since then, the Council has passed several motions with the aim of encouraging residents, businesses and Council staff to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle plastics.
- 7.3 Most notably, in 2019, the Council passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency; in this motion the Council pledged their commitment to do everything within its power to make North Hertfordshire Carbon Zero by 2030. The declaration, also in part, stated that officers would review the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 At the twenty first meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, member states, including the British government reached a historic agreement to strengthen the global response to Climate Change. This agreement included a landmark commitment to *“holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”*.
- 8.2 Following the Paris Climate Agreement, in 2018 the United Kingdom became the first major developed economy to assess how it will meet the terms of the agreement. As part of this process the UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) assessed the nation’s progress on the targets outlined in the Climate Change Act 2008. The findings from their analysis highlighted that the UK is not on course to meet its target to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050, nor transition to a low-carbon economy by 2050.
- 8.3 Already, the increase in temperature is having widespread impacts across the UK. Over the last ten years the UK has experienced a variety of climate-related extremes, including record wet winters, major floods and heatwaves.
- 8.4 Subsequently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 special report on Global Warming highlighted that any effort to limit global warming to 1.5°C as agreed in the Paris accord would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society and the declaration of a Climate Emergency. In line with this, in their 2019 report the CCC similarly asserted that Climate Change requires more ambitious reductions and radical actions by national government, local authorities, businesses, communities and individuals. The CCC concluded that if radical steps are taken the UK can end its contribution to global warming within 30 years. The Climate Change Act 2008 is the UK’s long-term framework for tackling Climate Change. The Act aims to facilitate the UK’s transition to a low-carbon economy by 2050.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet’s Terms of Reference include at 5.6.1 the power ‘to prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council’.
- 9.2 The proposed actions at Appendix B have already been agreed as part of the adoption of the Council Plan 2020-2025. The strategic priorities for 2020-2025 will provide high level reference points to assist the Council making clear and effective decisions to reduce environmental impact.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 A number of the proposed actions detailed in Appendix B will require additional resource and costs to achieve. As part of the budget planning process it will be necessary to determine the ways that the actions can be achieved and the costs involved. There is likely to be a need to prioritise the actions, in terms of the extent to which they can be delivered and the timing of delivery, to ensure that the overall programme is affordable within the resources that the Council has available. The draft budget for 2020/21 onwards sets a target for the delivery of net savings of £1.2m per year by the end of 2023/24. As this is a net target, this does allow for additional costs relating to new priorities but does require that these will increase the gross savings (efficiencies, income generation or service changes) that need to be delivered.
- 10.2 The Council will continue to face difficult spending decisions in view of the current economic climate and the expected continuing reduction in government support in future years. The availability of funding will impact on the services that can be delivered. Individual projects will be costed to enable decisions to be made on the overall programme of activity that the Council can deliver.
- 10.3 The Council received significant capital funding from the housing stock transfer to settle (formerly North Herts Homes) (set-aside receipts). It has supplemented this with the receipts from the sale of surplus land and buildings (capital receipts). The strategy adopted by the Council has been to concentrate capital funding on those schemes that reduce revenue costs or generate income. It is forecast that the set-aside receipts will all be used up during 2020/21, and therefore capital funding will have to come from capital receipts or borrowing. The availability of assets that can be sold to generate capital receipts is also reducing. It is therefore important that any agreed capital projects reflect corporate priorities, to ensure effective use of diminishing capital resources particularly in view of the fact that capital spend is also required to maintain existing service provision.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 If the Council fails to plan and respond to the potential negative impacts of Climate Change, there is a risk that Council services are not able to adapt or respond to changes linked to Climate Change. This could lead to Services becoming less resilient and becoming ineffective in responding to adverse weather conditions/events
- 11.2 Following adoption of the Strategy, officers will review the current Risk Register entry relating to "The Authority's response to Climate Change". The updated risk will reflect the risks and opportunities relating to the delivery of the proposed actions and the achievement of the Strategic Priorities specified. This will subsequently be referred to the Risk Management Group and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for further consideration.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. There are no direct negative impacts attached to this strategy. However further equality impact assessments may be undertaken for individual proposed projects.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no additional human resource requirements arising from this report. The resources needed to deliver services are considered and addressed through the service areas.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1. Appendix 1 – Climate Change Strategy
- 15.2. Appendix A – Completed Actions
- 15.3. Appendix B - Proposed actions

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1. None.