

Classification: Public

Key Decision: Yes

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Full Council

Date: 17 December 2019

Reporting officer: Director (Corporate Services)
Director (Housing and Operations)

Subject: Climate Change Motion

Purpose and summary of report:

In response to the Climate Change motion passed in June 2019, to present the Council's planned activity and future reporting procedures.

Recommendations:

1. That Full Council endorses the draft Climate Change Action Plan for the Council.
2. That an annual reporting process to Full Council is established to detail the progress made by the Corporate Working Group in implementing the Action Plan.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its Full Council meeting on 25 June 2019, Gravesham Borough Council passed a motion to declare a climate emergency and, accordingly, committed to Gravesham Borough Council taking a lead in achieving Carbon Neutral status.
- 1.2 In the global context of long term climate change, this motion represents a small step. As a local authority however, we have a social responsibility to improve the lives of local residents wherever possible and should therefore take a lead in the borough; taking action to reduce carbon emissions will also help make Gravesham a cleaner and more pleasant place to live in the short term.
- 1.3 The full Motion as adopted reads as:

Gravesham Borough Council with this motion declares we have a climate emergency and we will begin to take action to prepare for the borough to become carbon neutral by 2030.

1.4 In practical terms, on passing this motion Gravesham Borough Council committed to:

- Declare a climate emergency;
- Pledge to do what is within its powers and resources to make Gravesham Borough Council carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;
- Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;
- Continue to work with partners across the county and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies;
- Investigate all possible sources of external funding and match-funding to support this commitment;
- Complete a Green audit of all council services to ensure that weight is given to the environmental and sustainability impact as well as cost;
- The Council will encourage plastic-free initiatives and support events intended to promote plastic reduction in the Borough.
- Set up a working group to report back within six months with the actions the council will take to address this emergency.

2. Legislative context

- 2.1 There is now clear scientific evidence supporting the view that Climate Change is regrettably likely to become the defining issue of the 21st century, and evidence suggests that the Paris Agreement will not meet the 1.5°C limit before 2050.
- 2.2 The Climate Change Act was enacted in 2008 and set out to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline. The [Clean Growth Strategy](#) was laid before Parliament in October 2017 with a vision to leave our natural environment in a better condition than we found it.
- 2.3 However since then the Climate Change agenda has become higher profile, with an acknowledgment that urgent action is now required. The UK Government approved a motion to declare an environment and climate emergency on 1 May 2019, with the majority of local councils across the country having subsequently also declared climate emergencies.
- 2.4 The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [report 2019](#) concludes that global emissions must decline by 45% by 2030 (from 2010 levels) and reach net-zero by around 2050 to limit warming to 1.5°C. The report states that clear leadership is needed across all levels of government in the UK and that the zero-carbon policies and actions must be delivered in partnership with businesses and communities. It also acknowledges that policies must be funded and implemented coherently across all sectors, in order to drive the necessary innovation, market development and consumer up-take of low carbon technologies and influence behaviour change.

- 2.5 At a time of heightened public awareness and concern on climate change issues, the time is right for accelerating our response – 64% of UK Adults agree the UK should aim to cut its carbon emissions to zero in the next Decade (Bright Blue (April 2018) Public attitudes to UK climate leadership).
- 2.6 At a local level the Council confirmed its support for the [Kent Environment Strategy](#) and the [Kent Fuel Poverty Strategy](#), and signed the [Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020](#). More recently officers have been working with other Kent colleagues on the draft [Energy and Low Emissions Strategy](#) (currently being finalised) which seeks to develop a multi-agency approach to improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions and creating a more sustainable infrastructure across Kent and Medway and follows on from earlier work on the Renewable Energy Plan.
- 2.7 Local authorities have a key role to play as they are best placed to deliver actions at a local level and are the accountable body for a number of these actions.

3. Climate change: Gravesham activity

- 3.1 The Council has been undertaking actions to reduce carbon emissions across its own estate and the wider Borough for many years. The Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions report and HECA reports published on the Council's website, together with the Kent Environment Strategy updates, demonstrate the impact of the interventions that include:
 - Retrofit of energy efficiency measures across the Borough;
 - Funding secured to install measures to reduce levels of resident fuel poverty;
 - Collective energy switching;
 - LED lighting across estates;
 - The Council's recycling services already meet the Government's draft objectives for 2023 in terms of the range of materials collected; and
 - The Council's Fleet vehicles are being replaced to meet Euro 6 standard.
- 3.2 Following the local elections in May, the new administration identified the Climate Change agenda as a key part of the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan. Unanimously endorsed by Full Council in October 2019, the plan establishes a specific policy commitment, and a suite of performance indicators with which to chart the impact of the council's activity.
- 3.3 In view of the administration's commitment to the agenda, evident through the passing of the Climate Change motion, a working group was subsequently established to identify a way forward.
- 3.4 Comprising cross-party Members, Management Team and senior Officers, the group developed a draft action plan detailing a suite of progressive interventions that the Council should deliver in order to prepare the Borough to be carbon neutral by 2030, and to do what is within its powers and resources to make Gravesham Borough Council carbon neutral by 2030. The finalised action plan is attached as Appendix 2 to this report, and Full Council is asked to endorse its implementation. An internal officer group will establish lead officers for each action, anticipated timescales, resources and relevant supporting performance indicators in order to enable progress to be monitored on a periodic basis.

- 3.5 Following endorsement of the overall plan by Full Council, it is proposed that delivery will be overseen by the cross-party working group, who will meet on a quarterly basis, thereby providing the opportunity for engagement with external groups and organisations as well as assessing performance against the action plan through the suite of performance indicators. Furthermore, it is proposed that updates be brought to Full Council on an annual basis outlining the Council's overall progress in meeting the agreed action plan.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 There are no background papers to this report.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
Legal	We are committed to help government meet its carbon reduction targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008.
Finance and Value for Money	<p>Cost of actions to reduce carbon will need to be considered on all Council schemes/ projects. To date there has been no specific budget set aside for Climate Change/ Energy Efficiency schemes except on Housing Retrofit.</p> <p>Investigate all possible sources of external funding and match-funding to support Action Plan.</p> <p>Allocation of extra resource to this Agenda to fully evaluate each project/ scheme.</p>
Risk Assessment	The Council should not wait to have the definitive ‘right’ answer before taking action, however each action should be evaluated on its, cost, socio-economic, carbon and health impacts and whether it would be undertaken in the short, medium, or long term. This would ensure that the Council helps to achieve National and Local targets.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner’s Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice?</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. No</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Corporate Plan	<p>#1 People: Protected environment.</p> <p>Carbon Neutral Borough: in declaring a climate emergency, begin to take action to prepare Gravesham to become carbon neutral by 2030.</p>
Crime and Disorder	There are no crime and disorder implications resulting from this report.

Digital and website implications	There are no digital or website implications resulting from this report.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	There are no safeguarding children and vulnerable adults implications resulting from this report.