

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 2 MARCH 2023

TITLE OF REPORT: Resources to Deliver the Climate Change Action Plan

Report of: Executive Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer

Cabinet Portfolio: Climate Change

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Non-Exempt

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To seek Cabinet approval for a proposal to strengthen resources to deliver the Council's climate change agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Cabinet approve the resource proposals set out in this report.

BACKGROUND

3. The following lists shows the chronology of Hart's commitment to tackling climate change:
 - Sept 2019 - Hart District Council declared a Climate Emergency
 - Feb 2020 - Cabinet approved Climate Change Action Plan
 - April 2021 – Council agreed pledge to make Hart District carbon neutral by 2040 and areas under direct control of the Council carbon neutral by 2035
 - April 2022 – Climate Change update report to Council
 - August 2022 – Cabinet agreed budget allocation of £241k for projects
 - Oct 2022 – O&S/Cabinet received Eunomia report 'Net Zero Operational Road Map'

RESOURCES AND BUDGETS

4. The table below shows the budget and staff resources for the climate change function.

	2022/23 Budget £	2023/24 Draft Budget £	2023/24 Proposed
Staff cost	*55,000	*65,200	**115,200
Other running costs	6,100	4,800	4,800
General operational budget:			
- approved projects	241,500	250,000	200,000
- other, to be identified	8,500		
Total	311,100	320,000	320,000

*1x0.5fte Sustainability Officer, 1x0.7fte Comms and Engagement Officer

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1x0.5fte Projects Officer

5. In 2022/23 there is a balance of unspent budget of £20k arising from vacancies and unallocated running cost budget. It is proposed to utilise this budget on temporary resource, external, internal or partnership, to produce the updated action plan taking account of the Eunomia report. This will be in parallel to the recruitment process for the permanent staff.
6. Whilst the Council's original priority focused on carbon reduction, the wider climate change action plan covers a broader range of council functions including planning policy and flood risk etc. In order to fully deliver the Council's commitment to climate change the staff resource must be strengthened. Project management and comms and engagement are essential elements in the resource need. The proposals in this report will enable the necessary breadth of coverage and include applying for external funding, supporting colleagues and councillors with projects and policy formation, developing carbon literacy and producing enhanced data analysis and reporting.

ACTION PLAN AND TIMELINE

7. Subject to securing the required resource, it is the intention to report the revised action plan to Cabinet, via O&S in March/April 2023. The recruitment process will commence as soon as Cabinet approval is in place.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

8. The alternative 'do nothing' option would mean that the Council had insufficient staff resource and operating budget to deliver its aspirations and stated objectives under the key 'planet' priority set out in the Corporate Plan. Achieving the 2035 and 2040 targets will not be possible without adequate resourcing.
9. Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report at its meeting on 14 February and raised no concerns.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

10. The report directly supports the Corporate Plan and Hart Vision 2040.

Service Plan

- Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan? Yes
- Is the proposal being funded from current budgets? Yes
- Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?
No

Legal and Constitutional Issues

11. There are no direct implications

Financial and Resource Implications

12. The budget implications are set out in the report. The proposals are contained within the current budget approval and draft 23/24 budget.

Risk Management

13. The proposals should address the risk or failure to deliver against the Council's stated priorities and ensure that opportunities for securing external funding are explored.

EQUALITIES

14. The proposed changes set out in this paper are not considered to impact on equalities directly, all HR policies will be adhered to in the recruitment of staff resource.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

15. The proposals included in this report underpin the delivery of the Council's climate change action plan.

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Background Papers:

- Eunomia report
- Climate Change Action Plan Cabinet 2020
- Council minutes April 2021