

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 JUNE 2023

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Report of: Director of Corporate Services

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Non Exempt

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents the revised Climate Change Action Plan for consideration by the O&S Committee ahead of Cabinet approval.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is requested to review the draft Climate Change Action Plan and, having regard to the views of the Climate Change Working Group, pass any observations and comments to Cabinet.

BACKGROUND

The following shows the chronology of key decisions relating to Climate Change actions :

- 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’
- March 2023 – Cabinet approved proposal to strengthen the staff resources to deliver the Climate Change action plan.
- March 2023 – Local Partnerships were commissioned to prepare a revised action plan
- May 2023 – appointed new Sustainability and Climate Change Officer
- June 2023 – Climate Change Working Group met to consider the draft action plan.

MAIN ISSUES

Hart’s previously agreed action plan needed to be updated to reflect the findings of the Eunomia report. Officers commissioned Local Partnerships to undertake the review and to produce an easy-to-understand, deliverable plan which helps the council to prioritise its actions in pursuance of the agreed overall carbon reduction objectives. We also asked for an indication of costs to be identified against each action to inform our financial and resource planning. Local Partnerships are co-owned by the Treasury and the Local Government Association, and they support the public sector in a range of areas including specialist climate change consultancy to

local authorities. The draft Action plan, along with Local Partnerships' introduction and methodology are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

The Member/Officer Climate Change Working Group reviewed a presentation from Local Partnerships and considered the draft action plan at its meeting on 8 June 2023. The comments from this meeting are included at Appendix 3.

Whilst the core staff resource base has been strengthened to help coordinate and oversee the delivery of the plan, it is likely that additional resources will be needed for individual projects and initiatives. Officers will identify resource needs at the climate change officer group, and this will feed up to approval requests to Cabinet.

Once approved by Cabinet, the officer group will complete the allocation of lead officers and will start to work up detail costs and timescales. This will be done at pace to ensure that the focus on action and delivery.

The governance arrangements for the climate change action plan will be the officer group at operations level, which will take actions within delegations and budget approvals, the corporate Project Board which will oversee the programme of projects at a high level and O&S committee and Cabinet will monitor progress. The Portfolio Holder will work closely with the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer throughout the year.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The alternative 'do nothing' option would mean that the Council did not have an up to date action plan to coordinate the work and resources necessary 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 planning and oversight.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040 (check Heading 3)

The Climate Change Action plan supports the key 'Planet' priority set out in the Corporate Plan and its primary objective is to guide the Council towards achieving its vision.

Service Plan

- Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan? Yes
- Is the proposal being funded from current budgets? The plan is within existing budgets, some actions will require additional funding which will be subject to individual approval requests
- Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal? Yes for the coordination of the plan, some projects will require additional staff resource which will be subject to approval

Financial and Resource Implications

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

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

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

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

During 2023 there will be a council-wide review of reserves which will aim to target available resources at priority spending areas, including delivering the climate change action plan. The action plan identifies where external funding may be possible and officers will be focusing on this during 23/24 and beyond.

A separate report will be submitted to Cabinet in August seeking approval for a range of projects that align to the action plan. These will be individually costed and include estimated staff resource necessary to deliver them. The project budgets will be monitored by the finance team who will attend the climate change officer working group and the corporate project board for the larger projects.

Risk Management

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

The proposed changes set out in this paper are not considered to impact on equalities directly

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

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

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Local Partnerships' introduction and methodology

Appendix 2 - Draft Climate Change Action Plan

Appendix 3 – Notes from Climate Change Working Group meeting 8 June 2023

Background Papers:

There are no unpublished background papers