

CABINET

6 JULY 2023

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Report of: Executive Director - Corporate Services

Portfolio Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Corporate

Key Decision: Yes

Confidentiality: Non-Exempt

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report presents the draft Climate Change Action Plan for approval. It replaces all previous plans.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Cabinet is recommended to approve the Plan.

BACKGROUND

3. The following shows the chronology of key decisions relating to Climate Change actions:
 - a) Sept 2019 - Hart District Council declared a Climate Emergency
 - b) Feb 2020 - Cabinet approved Climate Change Action Plan
 - c) 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
 - d) April 2022 – Climate Change update report to Council
 - e) August 2022 – Cabinet agreed budget allocation of £241k for projects
 - f) Oct 2022 – O&S/Cabinet received Eunomia report 'Net Zero Operational Road Map'
 - g) March 2023 – Cabinet approved proposal to strengthen the staff resources to deliver the Climate Change Action Plan.
 - h) March 2023 – Local Partnerships commissioned to prepare a revised Action Plan
 - i) May 2023 – new Sustainability and Climate Change Officer appointed
 - j) June 2023 – Climate Change Working Group met to consider the draft Action Plan.
 - k) June 2023 draft Action Plan reviewed by Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MAIN ISSUES

4. The Council's previously agreed Action Plan needed to be updated to reflect the findings of the Eunomia report. Local Partnerships were commissioned to undertake the review and to produce an easy-to-understand, deliverable plan. The objective is to help the Council prioritise its actions in pursuance of the agreed overall carbon reduction objectives. An indication of costs was also sought against each action to inform financial and resource planning.
5. The draft Action Plan, along with Local Partnerships' introduction and methodology are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

6. The 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.
7. At its meeting on 20 June, Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from Local Partnerships and reviewed the draft plan. The following (in italics) is an extract from the draft minutes:

The meeting agreed that they liked the objectives and how they were linked and noted that this much improved plan. Members felt that there were some matters that needed further investigation,

- a) *Terminology - concern was raised that there were still references to Net Zero in the reports and on the web site. Officers undertook to ensure that only the term Carbon Neutral would be used in future and that all references to Net Zero would be removed. It was also noted that a reference to OLEV should say OZEV instead.*
- b) *Clarity – although the meeting liked the objectives it felt that it should be clearer who would be setting them and when. Concern was also raised about the vagueness of the outcomes. It was felt that these should be more specific. It was felt that reasonable time scales also needed to be set.*
- c) *Funding – it was explained that the outcomes were closely linked to funding. Discussion took place around how the various projects would be funded. It was acknowledged that there was some funding available in reserves, however the meeting was also told that there would be funding available from Central Government. It was explained any funding from Central Government was generally only available for a short space of time, and so Local Partnership was working with Hart’s Climate Change team to ensure that it was ready to bid for any funding as soon as it was available.*
- d) *Priorities – following on from the discussions about applying for funding, suggestions were made about splitting the objectives into smaller categories to give more flexibility, particularly the ‘indicative cost’ measure, allowing the council to prioritise more efficiently and so be able to take advantage of all and any opportunities that arise. However, it was also commented that expensive projects should not be dismissed as it was always possible that funding may be made available in the future.*
- e) *Renewable Energy – a query was raised as to whether, or not the council was already using 100% renewable energy. It was commented that Hart District Council bought green energy through a Hampshire County Council Scheme, but officers agreed to investigate exactly how green the energy purchased was. A query was also raised about the placing of Wind Turbines on Bramshott park, it was agreed that Local Partnership should reach out to the various airports in the district to see if this was in fact a viable option.*
- f) *Transport – it was commented that there seemed to be an omission in the report as regard to “getting people out of petrol and diesel vehicles”. Local Partnerships agreed and this additional point would be passed to Cabinet for consideration.*
- g) *Governance – it was welcomed that Corporate Project board will be overseeing the key projects and that Overview and Scrutiny will also be part of the governance process. Members felt that projects should not be open*

ended and that monies should only be released on the completion of the previous step.

8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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

11. The alternative 'do nothing' option is not feasible. The Council needs an up-to-date Action Plan if it is to address the climate emergency. 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

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
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*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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

13. The proposals included in this report underpin the delivery of the Council's climate change Action Plan.

Contact Details:

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Liz Vango-Smith – Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

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