

## **CABINET**

**THURSDAY 3 AUGUST**

### **CLIMATE CHANGE BUDGET ALLOCATION**

**Report of: Sustainability and Climate Change Officer**

**Cabinet Portfolio: Climate Change and Corporate**

**Key Decision: No**

**Confidentiality: Non-exempt**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. This report presents the current status on some priority actions identified in the Climate Action Plan, which was approved by Cabinet on 6 July, and recommended projects for Cabinet approval to be funded from the Climate Change budget.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

2. Cabinet is requested to review and approve the proposed projects list and associated cost allocations to be funded from the approved 2023/24 climate budget.

### **BACKGROUND**

3. Cabinet approved the revised Climate Change action plan on 6 July following scrutiny by the working group and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The proposals included in this report link to agreed actions within the plan and this is referenced in the table below.

### **MAIN ISSUES**

4. One of the key areas of focus in the Climate Change Action Plan is the buildings owned by the Council. There are options to consider both within the District and external to the District. Failure to prioritise buildings within the District could see resources allocated in a way that prevents the council reaching its District targets. If there is no prioritisation of council-owned buildings then progress will not be made on reducing carbon emissions.
5. Hart's pathway to achieving this action plan was included with the Action Plan and this outlines the key steps to work towards the Council's agreed climate targets. Without appropriate energy audits and reports, it will be difficult to ascertain the works that are required to decarbonise the council's buildings. In the first instance, energy audits and/or full decarbonisation plans are required to assess each building's requirements for decarbonisation. Energy audits should be the first step for the buildings with lower operations and most likely less complex emissions, which will then identify the requirement for full decarbonisation plans. Decarbonisation plans should be completed for the buildings with more complex operational outputs, such as Civic Head Office and the leisure centres. The results from these plans will enable Hart DC to apply for appropriate funding and prioritise works as part of an implementation programme
6. Insufficient resourcing is a key risk for delivery of the property projects and an opportunity has been identified to offer a temporary increase in hours to a key member of staff, who will be able to lead and support on a number of these projects. Without this additional resource, there is a risk of under-delivery.

7. The 'Energy' section of the Climate Change Action Plan identifies the opportunity for assessing and increasing solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. Without appropriate feasibility studies to assess building feasibility and options for renewable energy technologies, the council will be unable to install the appropriate technology. The feasibility studies will also identify suitability of each building for the recommended technology, such as structural stability, space available, etc.
8. There is an opportunity to continue engagement with Local Partnerships to look at next steps. Local Partnerships has been instrumental in developing the newly approved Action Plan and without their ongoing support, the council may miss key opportunities, such as funding information, as well as support with identifying next steps as a more detailed plan.

## **PROPOSALS**

9. To approve the projects and cost allocations as identified in 'Financial and Resource Implications'.
10. To approve the prioritisation of energy audits and decarbonisation plans for buildings listed as these are directly under council control within the District, with other buildings considered in a future phase of carbon reduction. Prioritise the council's high carbon-output operational buildings for decarbonisation plans such as civic and leisure centres, with a less complex audit and report for the buildings identified with less complex energy needs.
11. Approve budget to include renewable energy surveys and begin an implementation programme to install appropriate renewable technologies, such as solar PV on council-owned buildings.
12. Approve additional staff resource to enable ongoing planning and delivery of the Climate Change programme.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

13. Wait for funding stream to become available to cover costs for energy audits and decarbonisation strategies. There are currently no open or confirmed funding streams available for application at this time and a delay in initiating these audits and reports will prevent applications to other key funding streams.
14. Work on investment properties is not considered in the current phase of works (e.g. Edenbrook flats, Century House at Basingstoke, The Pavilion at Hedge End). At this time, there is currently a need to decarbonise within the District to meet the 2035 carbon neutral target and priorities should lie here in the first instance. In addition, there is a responsibility on tenants to reduce emissions in some of our buildings, so there is opportunity to allow time for them to implement measures. These buildings will be included for review at a later stage.
15. Energy audit and decarbonisation plan for the Harlington Centre is important, but has been shelved at this stage as a council-funded activity, due to the current uncertainties around building plans and lease agreements.
16. Springwell Lane Depot is not being put forward at this time, as it is the responsibility of the current tenants (Serco) to carry out energy audits and undertake energy saving measures. There are also potential restrictions on what can realistically be achieved, due current building structure and the level of financial investment that would potentially be needed to carry out significant energy reductions.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

17. The projects and expenditure proposed support the Climate Change Action plan, which in turn 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

18. Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan? Yes  
 19. Is the proposal being funded from current budgets? Yes  
 20. Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?  
 Yes

### Financial and Resource Implications

21. The Council approved £200k in the 2023/24 budget to undertake climate related projects. The table below details a number of proposed projects together with the estimated cost of each. Additional report(s) will be submitted as the climate programme progresses and further plans are developed as an outcome from the proposed projects below.
22. The estimated expenditure of £137k can be funded from the approved budget allocation for 2023/24.

Proposed item/project	Action Plan ref	Responsible officers	Estimated cost
Human resourcing: in-house surveyor overseeing buildings actions included in the Plan (internal)		Estate Surveyor/ Sustainability and Climate Change Officer	£4,500
Local Partnerships – continued critical friend support including facilitation, external funding and carbon literacy		Sustainability and Climate Change Officer/ Comms and Engagement Officer	£10,000
Decarbonisation plans: leisure centres		Large Contracts Officer/ Sustainability and Climate Change Officer	£40,000
Energy audit reports – HDC owned buildings leased to community orgs Cross Barn, CAB Yateley, Age Concern Yateley, Frogmore Day Centre		Estate Surveyor/ Sustainability and Climate Change Officer	£10,000
Renewable energy feasibility studies and first phase of implementation		Facilities Manager/ Sustainability and Climate Change Officer	£50,000
LED lighting for civic offices		Facilities Manager	£20,000
Training and seminars for staff			£2,500
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£137,000</b>

23. 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**

24. The risk in not going ahead with the proposed projects is that the council will be unable to make progress on the Climate Action Plan, or towards reaching our climate 2035 targets. External funding will be explored to implement decarbonisation plans and energy report findings.

### **EQUALITIES**

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

### **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

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

**Contact Details:** Liz Vango-Smith