

This Report will be made public on 8 October 2019

Report Number **C/19/28**

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 October 2019  
**Status:** Non key  
**Responsible Officer:** Charlotte Spendley, Assistant Director Finance, Customer and Support Services  
**Cabinet Member:** Cllr David Wimble, Cabinet Member for the District Economy

**SUBJECT:** CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY – UPDATE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION OF COUNCIL 24 JULY 2019

**SUMMARY:** This report is to update Cabinet on work that has been done to implement the Council resolution of 24 July 2019 on the climate change emergency, including the setting up of a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group and the recruitment of a Low Carbon Specialist to advise on and guide further work.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Cabinet is kept up-to-date and can recommend any further actions as appropriate.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note report C/19/28.
2. That Cabinet recommends any further actions, as appropriate, to address Council's resolution on the climate change emergency (24 July 2019, minute 33.2)

## **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 On 24 July 2019 Full Council moved a resolution to:

- 1) Declare that we are in a state of climate and ecological emergency;
- 2) Commit to reduce Folkestone & Hythe District Council's estate and operations to zero net carbon by 2030;
- 3) Ensure that all strategic decisions, policy, budgets, investments, contracts, approaches to planning decisions and the council's own developments are in line with a shift to zero carbon by 2030;
- 4) Ensure that all future council reports, where appropriate, include a climate impact statement;
- 5) To develop a strategy for Folkestone & Hythe District Council to play a leadership role in promoting community, public and business partnerships for this Carbon Neutral 2030 Commitment throughout the District;
- 6) To achieve this, create a Carbon Action Plan based on practical frameworks and advice such as provided by the Carbon Trust;
- 7) Establish a cross-party working group of full council to draw up, steer and monitor progress of the Carbon Action Plan, reporting back to full council in 6 months, then annually;
- 8) Call on the UK Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible, and ask local MPs to do likewise; and
- 9) Request that Cabinet shows leadership and adopts the matters raised in 1-8.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on work that has been undertaken on climate change since the resolution was made at Council.

## **2. ADDRESSING THE FULL COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

2.1 Since the resolution was made, work has progressed on a number of actions; these are outlined below along with further work that needs to be undertaken.

### **Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group**

2.2 Work is underway to establish a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group (point 7 of the resolution).

2.3 The Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group will comprise six members (one member from each political group, plus the

independent member). The chairman of the Working Group will be the Leader of the Council<sup>1</sup>.

- 2.4 The Terms of Reference and Rules of the Working Group are set out in Appendix 1 of this report. Nominations to the Working Group have been received from the political groups.
- 2.5 The purpose of the Working Group is to consider the matters raised in the Council resolution. Many of the matters in the resolution are executive functions and will require decisions of cabinet. However, the Report of the Leader (C/19/24) recommends that Cabinet work with this group in the same way as it will with the proposed working groups for Otterpool Park, the Corporate Plan and Folkestone Town Centre.
- 2.6 The Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group is due to meet for the first time on 18 October 2019. Carolyn McKenzie from Kent County Council (KCC) has been invited to present to the first meeting to give strategic level input and to describe the work that KCC has been undertaking on its Energy and Low Emissions Strategy<sup>2</sup>. Carolyn is also well placed to give appropriate input and reference to the work of other councils, and clusters of councils across Kent (East, West, North), so that the Working Group is aware of endeavours in this regard across the county. Following on from an understanding of the detailed strategic context, it is hoped that any relevant local actions will be supported as part of a coherent framework.
- 2.7 As the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group develops a programme of work, the Working Group will engage with Overview and Scrutiny Committee as appropriate.

### **Low Carbon and Sustainability Specialist**

- 2.8 It is clear that the Council will need to draw on specialist knowledge in low carbon and sustainability topics to advise the Working Group and drive forward work on the Carbon Strategy, Carbon Action Plan and other areas. This role capacity does not exist as part of the current staffing of the council. Despite pressures to significantly reduce staff costs through the Transformation Programme currently being implemented across the council (by up to £1.4million per annum), a new job description has been prepared for a Low Carbon and Sustainability Specialist to provide this advice and the Head of Paid Service has re-directed resources accordingly.
- 2.9 This new time limited role (in the first instance) will sit within the Council's Strategy Team. The role of the Low Carbon and Sustainability Specialist, as set out in the job description, is:
- To lead on the preparation of a Folkestone & Hythe Low Carbon Strategy and associated Action Plan, its monitoring and review;

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<sup>1</sup> See Report of the Leader of the Council, C/19/24

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://kccmediahub.net/kcc-accelerates-emissions-reductions-to-tackle-climate-change745>

- To be the Council's lead officer servicing the cross-party Working Group, taking the lead on preparing a strategy, forward plan, drafting reports and following up on actions, working internally with senior officers across the council and the Chair of the Group;
  - To be the Council's lead officer on multi-agency groups, working externally with partners across East Kent, the county and beyond to meet the targets of the Low Carbon Action Plan and other initiatives that are supported by the council; and
  - To act as part of the broader Strategy Team, undertaking a range of strategic, policy and performance activities as deemed necessary.
- 2.10 The job has been graded as F/G (£29,944 - £40,432) with the salary dependent on the qualifications, experience and skills of the successful candidate. This post is being advertised internally until 25 September 2019. If a suitable candidate cannot be found internally, then the post will be advertised externally, through the Jobs Go Public website and other appropriate channels.

### **Carbon Strategy and Carbon Action Plan**

- 2.11 Point 5 of the Council resolution calls for the council to develop a strategy, working with others, to achieve a shift to zero carbon in the district by 2030. Point 6 calls for the drafting of an Action Plan to achieve this shift, based on practical frameworks and advice provided by organisations such as the Carbon Trust.
- 2.12 The Carbon Strategy and Carbon Action Plan will be key documents for the Low Carbon Specialist to draft, guided by the Working Group, and with the involvement of a wide range of national and local interest groups, local residents and businesses, before it is adopted by Cabinet. There is existing practice to draw on, such as KCC's Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, and there are likely to be opportunities for joint work with neighbouring districts. Work on these actions can begin as soon as the Low Carbon Specialist has been appointed. The job description stresses that the Specialist will need to build close working relationships with a wide range of organisations to drive this work forward.

### **Corporate Actions and Processes**

- 2.13 The remaining parts of the resolution largely relate to corporate actions and processes including: the council's estate operations (point 2); budget, investment, planning and contract decisions (point 3); and the reporting of climate impact implications (point 4) which are all executive functions of the council exercised by cabinet and / or through delegated authority.
- 2.14 The Low Carbon Specialist will need to assess how far these parts of the resolution can be developed and embedded in the council's actions and processes, with advice from legal, financial, procurement and other specialists with relevant decisions made by the appropriate decision-maker.

- 2.15 Some aspects, such as the consideration of climate impacts in Cabinet and Council reports, will be relatively straightforward to put in place. The Low Carbon Specialist will have the knowledge to advise authors of reports on the potential climate change implications of their proposals so that these implications can be reported and considered by Cabinet and Council as appropriate.
- 2.16 Other parts of the resolution fall within areas governed by a wide range of legislation, national guidance and established procedures (for example financial, contract and planning decisions) and the council has limited freedom to develop its own procedures in these areas without risking legal challenge or appeals. Similarly there may be limited scope within the council's estate operations (particularly with the stock of existing buildings, council homes, vehicles and equipment) to achieve a shift to zero carbon in the short or medium-term. Developments such as Otterpool Park, however, provide many exciting opportunities for the council to directly influence and deliver ambitious low carbon construction and energy-efficient schemes that could serve as high profile exemplars for other developers across the district and beyond.
- 2.17 The Low Carbon Specialist will need to scope out what is feasible for all of these areas, with current technology and the financial and legislative constraints that the council operates within. Changes to processes and procedures will need to be considered and agreed by Cabinet or Full Council as appropriate.
- 2.18 As a large employer, there is likely to be much that the council can do by raising awareness of environmental and carbon issues with its staff, and encouraging changes of behaviour to minimise environmental impacts. This could be through maximising recycling within the workplace, running information sessions on how our lifestyles impact on the environment and promoting more sustainable forms of commuting, such as car sharing. This is an area that the Low Carbon Specialist can lead on, working with officers from Human Resources, Communications and Organisational Development.

### **Other Areas**

- 2.19 Other parts of the resolution (points 1 and 8) promote a leadership and lobbying role for the council. Again this is an area that the Low Carbon Specialist can lead on. This area of work could include a range of activities such as:
- Responding to consultations from government on new policy proposals;
  - Responding to consultations from neighbouring authorities and statutory organisations;
  - Applying to funding bodies for grants to fund and implement projects;
  - Working with local businesses to implement carbon reduction initiatives;

- Working with local schools and colleges to raise awareness and get students involved in projects; and
- Working with economic development specialists to promote the district as a welcoming location for investment for green technology businesses.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 Much has been done internally by the council since the July Council resolution on the climate change emergency, particularly in setting up the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working Group and securing specialist advice to guide future work.
- 3.2 Other areas of work can progress in earnest when the Working Group has met and the Low Carbon Specialist is in post. The Carbon Strategy will establish the overall direction for the council's work in this area and the Carbon Action Plan will set out specific actions, priorities and a timetable for the different projects, including the expected contributions of partner organisations.
- 3.3 Cabinet is asked to note this update report and recommend any further actions that could help contribute to reducing the district's carbon and environmental impacts in line with the Council resolution.

### 4. OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report is to update Cabinet and seek any additional recommendations. There are no alternative options proposed in the report.

### 5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
This is an update report and is not seeking a Cabinet decision.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Failure to progress council resolution leads to a poor reputation	High	Low	Resources have been made available and a dedicated staffing resource is being recruited to take forward the wishes of council through a range of executive and non-executive matters,

			thereby minimizing the risk.
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## **6. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS**

### **6.1 Legal Officer's Comments**

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

### **6.2 Finance Officer's Comments**

This is a new post and therefore has not been budgeted for in 19/20 however, this can be covered within existing salary underspends. The total cost to the council from 2020/21 onwards would be in the region of £37,172-£50,586 including on-costs. A growth bid has been put forward for this and will go to Cabinet for approval along with the 2020/21 Budget in February 2020.

### **5.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications**

There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report. However, any future policy and strategy proposals arising from the working group should consider any equalities implications as result of implementation through an equalities impact assessment (EIA) to ensure there is no direct impact on those with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

## **7. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Adrian Tofts, Planning Policy Manager  
 Telephone: 01303 853438  
 Email: [adrian.tofts@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.tofts@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group Terms of Reference and Rules

## **Appendix 1: Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group Terms of Reference and Rules**

### **1. Scope & Objective**

The Working Group will consider matters identified in the council resolution dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 (minute 33.2) highlighted in point 7 below:

#### **That Full Council:**

1. Recognises that we are in a climate emergency, and that the issue be referred to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to get the best way forward, and price it.
2. Commit to reduce Folkestone and Hythe District Council's estate and operations to zero net carbon by 2030.
3. Ensure that all strategic decisions, policy, budgets, investments, contracts, approaches to planning decisions and the council's own developments are in line with a shift to zero carbon by 2030.
4. Ensure that all future council reports, where appropriate, include a climate impact statement.
5. To develop a strategy for Folkestone and Hythe District Council to play a leadership role in promoting community, public and business partnerships for this Carbon Neutral 2030 Commitment throughout the District.
6. To achieve this, create a Carbon Action Plan based on practical frameworks and advice such as provided by the Carbon Trust.
- 7. Establish a cross-party working group of full council to draw up, steer and monitor progress of the Carbon Action Plan, reporting back to full council in 6 months, then annually.**
8. Call on the UK Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible, and ask local MPs to do likewise.
9. Request that Cabinet shows leadership and adopts the matters raised in 1-8 as above.

### **2. Membership**

Six members (1 member from each political group plus the independent member).



The chairman of the Working Group will be the Leader of the Council. If the chairman is not present at any particular meeting a chairman shall be elected for that meeting. The group will be supported by the Strategy, Performance & Policy Manager.

### **3. Authority**

The Working Group is advisory and has no decision making powers. Officers will make the views of the group known to both cabinet and the overview and scrutiny committee through the formal decision making processes.

### **4. Accountability**

The Working Group shall report to the Cabinet and Full Council as appropriate.

### **5. Methods of working**

Members of the Working Group are expected to work co-operatively and come to conclusions that are agreed by the group.

Formal votes should therefore be rare with decision of the Working Group taken by general consent.

### **6. Meetings**

The access to information procedure rules in the constitution do not apply. However members should receive any papers for the meetings in sufficient time for them to prepare for the meeting. There is a presumption that papers will be distributed electronically.

Proper records of the deliberations of the Working Group will be kept. Three members of the Working Group must be present for the meeting to proceed.

### **7. Frequency of Meetings**

The frequency of meetings will be informed by the need to have the Working Group consider issues.

### **8. Confidentially**

Those present will keep the discussions of the Working Group confidential unless the Working Group decides otherwise. The relationship between the Working Group and the media should follow the council's communications protocol at all times.

### **9. Overview and Scrutiny**

A Councillor who is on the Working Group shall not sit on the overview and scrutiny committee when it is scrutinising a decision made by the executive after receiving a report of the Working Group on which the Councillor sits.

#### **10. Freedom of information /Environmental Information Regulations**

The papers and notes/minutes of a Working Group will be the subject of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and will be documents that the public may have unless an exemption or exception applies.

#### **11. Interests**

Councillors should treat the Working Group as a formal meeting of the council for the purpose of the declarations of any interests and withdrawal from the meeting.