
Subject:	CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 4 November 2019
Report of:	Roger Walton, Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Trevor Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Commercial Services
Decision Type:	Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: This report has been prepared further to the Council meeting on 24 July, responding to Council's request for a report setting out the measures required to make the Council's activities carbon neutral and the actions that would need to be taken to make the District as a whole carbon neutral.

Recommendation: Cabinet is asked to:

1. Acknowledge the serious impact of climate change globally, agree that there is a need for urgent action;
2. Recommend to Council that a climate change emergency be declared;
3. Agree to establish a cross party Climate Change Member Working Group and that the Terms of Reference for that Group as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed in principle;
4. Agree that a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan led by the Member Working Group be prepared setting out plans for Dover District Council to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030 at the latest;
5. Pledge to do what is within the powers and resources of Dover District Council to support the wider community so that the District becomes carbon neutral by 2050;
6. Complete a baseline audit of the carbon emissions of all the Council services to inform the discussions of the Member Working Group.

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on 24 July 2019 two motions were agreed regarding aspects of Climate Change and the actions Dover District Council could take to limit use of fossil carbon and encourage others to do the same.
- 1.2 This report seeks to provide an overview of the wider context of the Climate Change Emergency whilst responding to the Council request for a report setting out the measures required to make the Council's activities carbon neutral and the actions that would need to be taken to make the District as a whole carbon neutral.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 As noted above, the Council meeting on 24 July 2019, passed two motions related to climate change as follows:

Motion No. 2

“The Council recognising the need to direct its efforts to urgently mitigate climate change, requires the Local Plan Project Advisory Group to consider how planning policies might be brought forward through the new Local Plan to require developers to include measures which support carbon use reduction (e.g. installation of PV panels, habitat creation, grey water systems, etc.).”

Motion No. 3

“On the 8th of October 2018 the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) warned that “rapid, far-reaching, and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” will be required in order to limit global temperature to 1.5C above pre-industrial level and that we have only 12 years in which we can realistically accomplish this. Even half a degree above that will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, mass extinctions of animal species, and extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people.

Within the current financial and regulatory framework, addressing this is primarily a matter for governments – local authorities have limited influence over the development of the local economy, transport, and human behaviour. Councils need significantly increased powers to make real change locally, and significantly greater intervention by central government to reduce climate change and reduce dependency on fossil carbon.

Nevertheless, there are actions the council can take, to limit our own use of fossil carbon and encourage others to do the same, although this is limited by available resources and the scale of government cuts the council has to cope with. Dover & Deal District must take this matter seriously and be committed to taking a lead on this and set a target for Dover & Deal to become carbon neutral.

Recognising the need for action on this issue, the Council agrees:

- 1. To ask officers to bring forward a report for consideration by Cabinet and Council this autumn setting out the measures required to make the Council’s activities carbon neutral and the actions that would need to be taken to make the District as a whole carbon neutral;*
- 2. To undertake a review of its procurement policies to ensure that the impact on climate change is given appropriate consideration within all procurement decisions;*
- 3. To welcome the work already undertaken undertake by the Grounds Maintenance Team in response to climate change and to encourage diversity;*
- 4. To ask officers to include an evaluation of the climate change implications of any proposal in all reports to Council committees;*
- 5. To build on our existing single use plastic policy by seeking to prohibit the use of single use plastics at events held on council land.”*

- 2.2 This report seeks to provide the report as requested by point 1 in Motion3, whilst recognising that there is now clear scientific evidence supporting the view that Climate

Change is regrettably likely to become the defining issue of the 21st century, and evidence suggests that the Paris Agreement will not meet the 1.5°C limit before 2050.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Climate Change Act was enacted in 2008 and set out to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baseline. However since then the Climate Change agenda has gained a much higher profile at both national and international level, given the very strong consensus in the scientific community that climate change is occurring and that humans are the cause of this recent climate change.
- 3.2 As noted within the text to Motion 3, in October 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported on the state of global warming. It warned that there is only a dozen years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. It also outlined that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society. Since this report increased focus has arisen from governments and interest groups on climate change and on carbon reduction.
- 3.3 In May 2019, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), published a report entitled “Net Zero - The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming” recommending a new emissions target for the UK: net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050. This has quickly been taken forward by the UK Government, by setting a new legally binding target for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, via an amendment to the Climate Change Act that came into force on Thursday 27 June 2019. This aims to bring an end to the UK’s contribution to the emissions that cause climate change.
- 3.4 In parallel to the action taken by the UK, worldwide recognition of this has prompted action around the world driven by campaigns such as those led by Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion. This action has led to declarations of a Climate Emergency by cities and organisations around the globe. Within Kent, a Climate Emergency has been declared by; Kent CC, Canterbury CC, Folkestone & Hythe DC, Gravesham BC, Maidstone BC, Medway, Swale BC, Thanet DC & Tunbridge Wells BC.
- 3.5 It is understood that more than half the UK’s principal local authorities have now declared a climate emergency, with widespread support across political groups. Many have set 2030 as a target date for going carbon zero, 20 years ahead of central government’s 2050 target.
- 3.6 The Local Government Association (LGA) declared a Climate Emergency at its Annual General Meeting in July and agreed to establish the Climate Emergency Network Special Interest Group, to support councils and lobby central Government.
- 3.7 Cllr David Renard, the LGA’s Environment spokesman has noted that;

“Climate change is the biggest threat to our planet and Councils are best placed to respond to the public’s growing concern about this and other burning environmental issues...”

Councils are already doing significant work to mitigate and support communities to adapt to climate change, and can play a leading role in delivering a better environment for everyone. We can achieve faster progress by taking the lead on harnessing national initiatives at a grassroots level to benefit local communities and the environment.”

He has also noted that:

“...local government cannot work alone. To achieve the ambition of net zero carbon emissions, councils will need further powers and sustainable funding, including easier access to government funding streams, to deliver national policies which impact on climate change locally.”

- 3.8 At a local level the Council has over recent months confirmed its support for the [Kent Environment Strategy](#) and the [Kent Fuel Poverty Strategy](#), and signed the [Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020](#). More recently officers have been working with other Kent colleagues on the draft [Energy and Low Emissions Strategy](#) (currently out for consultation) which seeks to develop a multi-agency approach to improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions and creating a more sustainable infrastructure across Kent and Medway and follows on from earlier work on the Renewable Energy Plan.
- 3.9 At a time of heightened public awareness and concern on climate change issues, the time is therefore right for accelerating our response – 64% of UK Adults agree the UK should aim to cut its carbon emissions to zero in the next Decade (*Bright Blue (April 2018) Public attitudes to UK climate leadership*).
- 3.10 Given the weight of evidence and the action being taken nationally and internationally, there is a strong case that the Council should consider joining other local authorities by making a clear public commitment that a climate change emergency is declared and that it will work to reduce its carbon emissions as a priority. This would provide a focus to its carbon reduction work.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 However, whilst making a public statement would be an important first step to signal a change in direction. it achieves nothing unless supported by action. It is therefore important to set out the next steps which the Council will seek to take in pursuit of this goal.
- 4.2 Before considering the action to take it is important to note the precise meaning of key terms such as ‘carbon neutral’ ‘net zero’ etc., which are set out in the following table.

Definitions

Carbon Neutral	Offset emissions against a measured footprint Specified by PAS 2060 – most commonly used approach/ standard to offsetting Mandatory carbon reduction and management plan Requires offsets providing genuine and additional GHG reductions
Net Positive	Enabling effect (avoided emissions) of products and services is greater than emissions.
Carbon Zero	Zero emissions
Net Zero Carbon	Aim to get as close to zero as possible (e.g. following stretching target), then offset residual emissions, with good quality offsets

4.3 Whilst it is accepted that concerns regarding the potential impact of climate change and the consequent need for action are understandably increasing, it should be acknowledged that the Council has already been undertaking actions that reduce carbon emissions across its own estate and the wider district for many years. The Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions report and HECA reports published on the Council's website, together with the Kent Environment Strategy updates demonstrate the impact of the interventions. Some of the actions outlined in these reports include:-

- Retrofit of energy efficiency measures across the district
- Funding secured to install measures to reduce levels of fuel poverty in the district
- Collective energy switching
- LED Street lighting
- Housing Assistance
- EV charging point installations
- Coastal erosion schemes
- Habitat schemes/ green corridors
- The Council's recycling services already meet the Governments draft objectives for 2023 in terms of the range of materials collected.

4.4 However, if the Council is to respond meaningfully to the current challenge we need to do much more.

4.5 There are potentially three areas to focus on;

- (a) Raising awareness;
- (b) Reducing emissions from our own activities;
- (c) Developing plans to reduce emissions across the District.

What can the Council do to increase awareness?

4.6 [The Committee on Climate Change 'Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming' report May 2019](#) states that clear leadership is needed across all levels of government in the UK and those zero-carbon policies and actions must be delivered in partnership with businesses and communities.

4.7 Knowing what to do is only one part of the journey, it is equally important to focus on the way in which we do it. ['Zero Carbon Britain – Making it happen](#) highlights that; *'climate change is not the root problem but a symptom of our materialistic culture and growing disconnection from nature and each other'*. Whilst the Council cannot hope to reverse global trends alone, it can be part of the solution.

4.8 If we are to genuinely change behaviours and encourage the move towards a carbon neutral future, then there is a role for the Council as community leader to play both through its general promotional work and by proactively promoting it's own commitment by putting environmental considerations at the forefront of it's decision making.

4.9 The agreement in July to include an evaluation of the climate change implications of any proposal in all reports to Council committees, will ensure that the Climate Change Agenda is considered across all departments/ projects. It is suggested that this be strengthened by rather than just adding 'climate change' to the list of comments on each report, which currently covers Legal, Finance and Equalities, that this is extended to include; "Social Impact: Human, Economic, Environment".

What actions can the Council take to reduce its own emissions?

- 4.10 There are many areas across the Council where action can be taken, but in order to set a target for reducing the Council's own carbon emissions to net-zero, it needs to understand which services deliver emissions and why. It can then plan to address these in priority order.
- 4.11 Whilst the Council can demonstrate reduced energy usage from its buildings, through the investment in LED lighting etc, there is limited information about its overall carbon footprint and which services result in the highest level of carbon emissions.
- 4.12 The Council's annual [Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report](#) provides some basic information but as we seek to identify the actions required to reduce emissions one of the first tasks will be to gather baseline data on its service delivery. From this the services with the biggest impact can be identified.
- 4.13 In terms of setting a target date by which the Council's emissions would reach net-zero the most obvious approach would be to align with the government's target of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050, which would be very challenging. The Committee on Climate Change states that setting an earlier date than 2050 is not credible. However, setting a target date of over 30 years does not convey the sense of urgency that is needed to address global warming. It is therefore proposed that a target date of 2030 be set, but Cabinet should be aware that this aspirational target is being proposed before specific actions and resource requirements have been identified.
- 4.14 Once detailed information is available regarding its current carbon footprint, the Council can start to develop a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan setting out the measures needed for the Council to become a net zero carbon emitter.
- 4.15 It is proposed that this work should be supported by a Member Working Group who would finalise the Terms of Reference and the scope of the project, for example in determining to what extent the Strategy would consider wider community measures outside of those which deliver the Councils own zero net carbon target.
- 4.16 Subject to the consideration of the working group, examples of measures that could be considered through the Strategy include:

Own Estate

- Decarbonise own estate through retrofit of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies;
- Include high standards of energy efficiency (near zero) in new builds, and renewable energy technologies where possible to future proof (overheating to be taken into account too);
- Purchase of green energy;
- Develop district heating;
- Active travel plans for work;
- Electric vehicle pool cars;
- Transition own fleet vehicles to hybrid/ electric/ hydrogen;
- Ensure own Estate/ Commercial properties meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards;
- Roll out LED Street lighting;

Council Housing Stock

- Retrofit with energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies;

- Ensure housing stock meets Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, with the aim to all of the stock reaching at least 'C' EPC rating by 2030;

Governance

- Ensure environmental impacts are included in all Procurement decisions;
- Green issues to be at the heart of Corporate Plan, and everything the Council does;
- Consider establishing a wider Climate Change Forum/ Peoples' Assembly;

Biodiversity

- Green corridors/ planting;
- Trees/ hedge planting to improve air quality;

Waste

- Extend recycling provision responding to the latest government initiatives.

Air Quality

- Many of the actions outlined above will support Council initiatives which seek to tackle air quality and reduce pollution.

What actions can the Council take to reduce its emissions across the District?

- 4.17 If we are to respond effectively to the challenge of tackling climate change, as noted above the Council as community leader and influencer on Climate Change should aim to inspire individuals, businesses and other organisations to commit to take action to reduce the Districts carbon footprint.
- 4.18 The precise actions will be a matter for the Member Working Group to review but it is expected would extend as a minimum involve, to liaising with key businesses/ community groups, signposting businesses/ residents to information (i.e. website/ social media) and providing support to access grants and expertise to assist in reducing carbon emissions.
- 4.19 As this work moves forward, given that over half of the Kent local authorities have now declared a Climate Emergency, there is clearly an opportunity to work collectively to bring forward proposals to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon use within both this District and Kent as a whole. This builds on the existing collaborative work with other Kent local authorities undertaken over recent years to implement the actions agreed within the Kent Environment Strategy, the latest version of which was agreed by this Council on 14 May 2018.
- 4.20 A key early area for action by this Council will be to ensure that the current review of the Local Plan deals comprehensively with the issue of climate change as this will be a key issue that is considered at the Local Plan Examination. This was recognised by Council through the agreement to Motion 2 and will be taken forward through the Local Plan Project Advisory Group. To inform this work, it is intended to bring forward as an early priority a specific Topic Paper on climate change as key part of the Local Plan review process. This Topic Paper will need to consider the proposed changes to the Building Regulations and how these will inform the wording of policies in the Local Plan.
- 4.21 Issues which this may need to consider could include:

- Engaging with developers to build energy efficient (near zero) properties with renewable energy technologies where possible to future proof the housing stock;
- Identify areas within the local plan for renewable energy installations;
- Ensure consideration is given to transport issues, electric vehicle charging points, accessibility to public transport, active travel (cycling/walking);
- Possibility of district heating schemes; and
- Explore joint working on climate change issues as part of the development of the Local Plan as climate change issues cross administrative boundaries.

5. Identification of Options

5.1 The following options are proposed for Cabinet to consider:

Option 1:

1. Acknowledge the serious impact of climate change globally, agree that there is a need for urgent action;
2. Recommend to Council that a climate change emergency be declared.
3. Agree to establish a cross party Climate Change Member Working Group and that the Terms of Reference for that Group as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed in principle;
4. Agree that a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan led by the Member Working Group be prepared setting out plans for Dover District Council to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030 at the latest.
5. Pledge to do what is within the powers and resources of Dover District Council to support the wider community so that the District becomes carbon neutral by 2050.
6. Complete a baseline audit of the carbon emissions of all the Council services to inform the discussions of the Member Working Group.

Option 2:

Do none of the above

6. Evaluation of Options

6.1 Option 1 is the preferred option as this makes a clear statement as to the Council's position on this issue whilst setting out the measures required to make the Council's activities carbon neutral and proposes actions to take the first steps towards making the District as a whole carbon neutral.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 There are no costs identified at this stage although clearly the cost of actions required to reduce carbon will need to be considered on all Council schemes/ projects as work is progressed. To date there has been no specific budget set aside for Climate Change/ Energy Efficiency schemes.

8. Corporate Implications

- 8.1 Comment from the Director of Finance: Accountancy has been consulted and has no further comment. (DL)
- 8.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Head of Governance has been consulted during the preparation of this report and has no further comment to make. (LM)
- 8.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>. (KS)
- 8.4 Social Impact: Human, Economic, Environment:

Climate change is the biggest threat to our planet and in providing a framework for the Council to develop its response, the report makes a clear statement as to the Council's position on this issue whilst setting out the measures required to make the Council's activities carbon neutral and proposes actions to take the first steps towards making the District as a whole carbon neutral. It notes that Councils are best placed to respond to the public's growing concern about this and other burning environmental issues.

It should however be noted that an essential part of becoming carbon neutral would be to ensure environmental priorities work alongside commitments to address equality, health inequalities, and social justice. Some of the 'Climate Change' policy changes could present a challenge for the more disadvantaged (i.e. purchase of new electric vehicles, cost of green technologies, therefore the impact of decisions on the most vulnerable in the District should be taken into account as plans are developed. (RW)

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Climate Change Working Group Terms of Reference

10. Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Roger Walton, Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)

Climate Change Working Group Terms of Reference (Draft)

1. Purpose;

The Climate Change Working Group is a forum for Members to explore issues associated with climate change.

2. Objectives;

The Working Group Objectives are:

- To understand the opportunities in delivering and setting a Council wide net zero carbon emission target;
- To identify the scope of and prepare, a costed Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, setting out plans for Dover District Council to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030 at the latest
- To identify resources required to implement the Strategy and Action Plan;
- To set a regular (no less than annual) review and monitoring process.

3. Membership;

The Group is not required to be democratically representative of the current electoral membership of the Council but attendees will be:

- Portfolio Holder for Environment & Commercial Services;
- Portfolio Holder for Planning & Regulatory Services;
- One representative of each of the respective political groups;

Officer representation:

- Strategic Director (Operations & Commercial);
- Head of Leadership Support;
- Head of Assets & Building Control;
- Head of Regeneration & Planning;
- Climate Change and Energy Conservation Officer.

The group is considered quorate if three Members are available. The Working Group will establish at its first meeting whether substitutions (where the above-mentioned Members are not available) are to be accepted.

4. Meetings;

Meetings will be held broadly every month leading up to adoption of the Climate Change Strategy and then every two months once the Strategy is agreed, or ahead of key project deadlines/reporting timelines.