
Subject:	CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 11 January 2021
Report of:	Roger Walton, Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Trevor Bartlett, Leader of the Council
Decision Type:	Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To seek approval for the Council's Climate Change Strategy and underlying Action Plan.

Recommendation: Cabinet is asked to:

1. Approve the Climate Change Strategy
2. Approve the actions as outlined in the Action Plan.
3. Confirm support for the continued development of the actions covering both those emissions within the Council's control and those over which the Council has Influence/Concern.

1. Summary

1.1 Following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in January 2020 a Strategy and underlying Action Plan have now been developed setting out the steps needed for the Council to reach net zero by 2030 and also to support the wider district to become net zero by 2050. The Strategy details the need for action, defines the extent of emissions with DDC Control and those over which the Council has Influence/Concern, and sets out the areas which require action to be taken to adapt to and mitigate against climate change.

1.2 This report seeks approval for the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy and the underlying Action Plan.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 At the meeting on 31 January 2020 the Council declared a Climate Emergency. The declaration agreed at that time included commitments to: -

- Agree to establish a cross party Climate Change Member Working Group: -
 - 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.
- 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;
- 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
- Complete a baseline audit of the carbon emissions of all the Council services to inform the discussions of the Member Working Group

- 2.2 A Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) was formed as agreed and has met regularly since December 2019 (meeting every other month), received reports on a range of related issues and discussed the broader agenda.
- 2.3 The CCWG has received presentations from Kent County Council (Climate Emergency and Net Zero Emissions Update) The Woodland Trust (Action on climate change: the role of trees and woodland), Bureau Veritas (Dover Air Quality Plan – Local Action and Links with Climate Change), Riding Sunbeams (Power Railways with Solar PV) to help inform future decision making.
- 2.4 A copy of the Climate Change chapter included within the draft Local Plan was circulated to members of the CCWG, discussed at the September 2020 meeting and Members feedback was used to revise the draft. The CCWG has also received regular updates on current projects/ initiatives that are currently being undertaken that will reduce emissions.
- 2.5 To support the work required as part of the Council's response to the climate emergency the sum of £475k was included in the Capital Programme within the Medium-Term Financial Plan to provide funding for those projects that reduce the Council's/ District's carbon footprint, which it was expected would come forward through the development of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2.6 The CCWG has reviewed initial drafts of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan at the meetings held in September and November and work on the documents has now advanced to a point where formal approval for Cabinet is being sought. Copies of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan can be found at Appendix A to this report.
- 2.7 The purpose of the Climate Change Strategy is to explain how the Council intends to step up to meet the challenge and turn the Climate Emergency declaration into a plan of action. The Strategy gives focus to how the 2030 target of net zero for the Council's own estate, and the 2050 target for the wider district can be met.
- 2.8 The aim of the Action Plan is to refocus the Council's activity, operations and spheres of influence to reduce emissions, increase sustainability and benefit the wider environment. The Action Plan is split into areas where the Council has direct control, aims to reduce emissions where the Council has influence, and action that could possibly be taken by the Council to reduce emissions that are outside of its remit but are of concern.
- 2.9 The Action Plan is split into 8 cross cutting themes:
 - Assets & Estate
 - Housing
 - Governance
 - Natural Environment
 - Waste
 - Air Quality
 - Local Development Plan
 - Transport
- 2.10 As noted above, the Strategy and Control Action Plan have both been circulated to and discussed by the CCWG and their comments and feedback have been incorporated in the final document. It is proposed that the Action Plan will be an evolving document and will be updated regularly in order to consider new technology, information and targets.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 There are essentially two options available to Cabinet:

- 1) Endorse and approve the Strategy, approve the action plan and to support and resource the actions with the aim of meeting the net zero targets for the Council's estate and wider district.
- 2) Do nothing. However, this would negate the clear intentions and objectives of the Climate Change Emergency and National and International ambition.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option as this will affirm that the Council is committed to playing its part, demonstrate leadership and become part of the solution to the Climate emergency.
- 4.2 To do nothing would mean that existing emissions in both the Council's own operations and district would continue to have a negative impact on the environment and undermine confidence in the Council's response to the Climate Emergency.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications in agreeing to support the Climate Change Strategy. However, if the Council is to achieve its ambition to reduce emissions to net zero by 2030, then the resource implications could be significant and will need to be considered across all Council business/projects/ activities.
- 5.2 Some of the actions outlined in the strategy will become projects and will necessarily have financial, resource or property implications, which will need to be considered across all Council business/projects/activities. The sum of £475k has therefore been included in the Capital Programme within the Medium-Term Financial Plan to provide funding for those projects which support the delivery of the Strategy. As specific proposals are developed, further reports will be made to Cabinet to draw down funding, which will need to be considered against the wider Council business/projects/activities recognising the pressures on Council funding.

6. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 6.1 The specific purpose of the strategy is to present Dover District Council's overall approach to the climate emergency. The overall principle behind the strategy is to set out the need for action and the key areas where Dover District Council can have an impact on lowering emissions. The Action Plan details how reduction in emissions and improvements to our environment can be made either through direct Council action, or by influencing/ encouraging action in areas that are outside the Council's control.

7. Corporate Implications

- 7.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Members are reminded that the Council's revenue and capital resources are limited and are under pressure, therefore it is important that all initiatives are affordable, value for money and deliver the Council's priorities (MD).
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make. (HR)
- 7.3 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/section/149>

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (to follow)

9. Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Amanda Martin, Climate Change and Energy Conservation Officer