

Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Summary

Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in October 2019, a Climate Change Working Group was formed. A key action of this group is the development of a Climate Change Action Plan, to set out the aims, objectives and actions for delivery in Surrey Heath to support achieving the 2030 carbon neutral target. Executive approval is requested for the agreement and publication of the Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan. It is envisaged that this Action Plan will sit within the broader framework of the Surrey Climate Change Strategy. This report also seeks endorsement of Surrey's Climate Change Strategy.

The Climate Change Action Plan was developed in conjunction with the Climate Change Working Group and the Plan has its support. The Action Plan includes a total of 65 Actions across 6 key themes, with actions prioritised for delivery, based on feedback from the Climate Change Working Group. It sets out Surrey Heath specific actions, whilst recognising the importance of partnership working to deliver these actions. The Action Plan is proposed to be a living document, which will be reviewed and updated and will feed into customer friendly webpages which will form the basis for ongoing public engagement on Climate Change.

Portfolio: Environment & Health Portfolio Holder

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 3 March 2021

Wards Affected: All

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the Climate Change Action Plan, as set out at Annex A to this report, be agreed and Surrey's Climate Change Strategy be endorsed.

1. Key Issues

- 1.1 Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing our society. The scientific evidence of climate change is overwhelming and will have a lasting impact on people and wildlife (see Annex 1, Appendix 1 for more details). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018 report makes clear that the impacts of climate change are being experienced now through unprecedented global trends and through more localised severe weather events.
- 1.2 The United Nations and the international scientific community have made clear the potentially severe global human, environmental and economic impacts that man-made climate change poses. The Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 recognised the need to accelerate actions and investment to combat climate change and pursue efforts to limit the future global temperature increase to 1.5°C. The potential

implications if we do nothing for communities include increased risk of flooding and extreme heat, disruption to critical infrastructure, networks and industry, and increased risk to our health and wellbeing.

- 1.3 On the 9th of October 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations, including contractors used, and support the actions being taken by Surrey County Council in this area.
- 1.4 A Climate Change Action Plan has been prepared to assist the Council in delivering the targets set by the Climate Emergency declared in 2019 and support partnership working on climate change. This Action Plan was developed in conjunction with the Climate Change Working Group, over a number of meetings, and has its support. At the 4th February 2021 Climate Change Working Group meeting it was resolved to ask for Executive to agree the Climate Change Action Plan. The Action Plan has two key aims:
 1. To work towards achieving the ambitious net-zero carbon emission target by 2030 as an organisation and contribute to making the Borough net zero by 2050 (with the aspiration for net zero by 2030).
 2. To ensure that the Council as an organisation is resilient to the impacts of climate change and support the resilience of the Borough to the impacts of climate change.
- 1.5 The aims are supported by eight objectives which are set out in the Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan (Annex 1). The Action Plan is supported by the emission baseline set out in the Climate Change Study¹ prepared by Aceom on behalf of the Council to support the development of the new Local Plan. Chapter 4 of the study sets out the baseline carbon emissions for Council as an organisation, as well as the Borough wide emissions (2017 base year).
- 1.6 The total baseline emissions from Surrey Heath Borough Council's buildings and assets in 2017 was 4,122 tCO₂e. Currently, the greatest contributor to the Council's own GHG emissions is procurement spend, accounting for 71.2% of emissions. The total emissions for the Borough in 2017 was 417,346 tCO₂e. The greatest contributor to this was domestic energy use, accounting for 41% of emissions, with road transport the next greatest contributor (33%).
- 1.7 The study also makes wider recommendations on how the Draft Local Plan, which is currently being prepared by the Council can help to address climate change. It is intended that the new Local Plan will deliver climate change actions specific to planning, including ensuring that new developments contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. As such, Local Plan Actions have not been included in the Climate Change Action Plan at this stage.

¹ Available at

<https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Surrey%20Heath%20Local%20Plan%20-%20Climate%20Change%20Study.pdf>

- 1.8 The Action Plan has been separated into the following six key themes:
- Energy – includes 12 actions
 - Transport – includes 12 actions
 - Environment – includes 13 actions
 - Behavioural change – includes 15 actions
 - Operations – includes 10 actions
 - Monitoring – includes 3 actions
- 1.9 For each of the 6 key themes, actions have been categorised according to the following criteria:
- If the action is a Council operation (actions directly within the scope of Surrey Heath Borough Council as an organisation) or actions in the wider borough (actions to support and work with all other relevant organisations and individuals to significantly reduce emissions Surrey Heath).
 - If the action is direct (for example the installation electric vehicle charging points) or indirect (for example undertaking initial scoping work to understand the feasibility of installing electric vehicle charging points).
 - If the action is high, medium or low priority. This was determined based on the ease and effectiveness of delivering an action, in consultation with the Council's Climate Change Working Group.
 - Start date timescales, as defined in table 1 of Annex 1.
 - If the action can be delivered within existing budgets, is likely to require additional funding or will require additional funding (either through capital or revenue investment or grant funding).
- 1.10 The challenges associated with addressing climate change are inherently complex and guidance and best practice is continually evolving because of changes in technology and our understanding of the issues. Therefore, the Action Plan has been prepared as a living document that will be updated regularly, adapting to changing circumstances and in consultation with the Climate Change Working Group.
- 1.11 The Action Plan draws directly on Surrey's Climate Change Strategy (Annex 2), providing an Action Plan that is specific to Surrey Heath Borough Council. The Surrey strategy supports the shared ambition of Surrey's 12 local authorities for Surrey's residents to live in clean, safe and green communities, where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities and sets out the collective approach to do our part to tackle climate change. The strategy establishes the approach for how Surrey's local authorities and other partners will work together to put the county on the path to net zero carbon emissions.
- 1.12 The Surrey strategy was developed through engaging with academic partners, residents, businesses, schools and emergency services through workshops, focus groups, resident panels, and commissioning groups. It contains:

- 8 themed chapters
- 19 targets
- 164 actions

2. Resource Implications

- 2.1 The work to date has been carried out within existing staffing resources. The Council is currently recruiting for a Climate Change Officer to take this work forward. This will be funded from a combination of salary savings from an unfilled posts and government grants..
- 2.2 The 2021/2022 includes a revenue growth of £45,000 for Climate Change Work. Any capital funding required will be submitted to the Council for approval on a case for case basis.
- 2.3 There is the potential that a number of actions will be delivered through external funding streams, such as government grants. It should be noted that in many cases actions requiring investment will pay back in the future. For example, through investing in improvements to the energy efficiency of Council owned and operated buildings, future energy bills will be reduced creating a long-term saving.

3. Options

- 3.1 The Executive has the following options:
- To **AGREE** the Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan.
 - To **AGREE** to endorse Surrey's Climate Change Strategy.
 - To **NOT AGREE** for the Council to agree the Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan.
 - To **NOT AGREE** for the Council to endorse Surrey's Climate Change Strategy.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 For the Council to agree the Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan and endorse Surrey's Climate Change Strategy.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Action Plan is supported by the emission baseline set out in the Climate Change Study² prepared by Aceom on behalf of the Council to support the development of the new Local Plan. Chapter 4 of the study sets out the baseline carbon emissions for Council as an organisation, as well as the Borough wide emissions (2017 base year).

² Available at

<https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Surrey%20Heath%20Local%20Plan%20-%20Climate%20Change%20Study.pdf>

6. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

- 6.1 The implementation of Action Plan will play a pivotal role delivering the 2030 carbon neutral target set by the Climate Emergency declared in October 2019.

7. Policy Framework

- 7.1 None.

8. Legal Issues

- 8.1 None identified at this stage.

9. Governance

- 9.1 The Climate Change Working Group will take a lead role in overseeing the delivery of the Action Plan, should it be agreed.

10. Risk Management

- 10.1 None.

11. Equalities Impact

- 11.1 None.

12. Human Rights

- 12.1 None.

13. Environmental Impact

- 13.1 The implementation of Action Plan will play a pivotal role delivering the 2030 carbon neutral target set by the Climate Emergency declared in October 2019. The benefits of delivering climate change mitigation and adaptation are wide ranging, including supporting biodiversity and contributing to human health.

14. Consultation

- 14.1 The Climate Change Action Plan was considered by the Climate Change Officers Group meeting in January 2021 and by the Climate Change Working Group at the 4th of February meeting. Public engagement is proposed through the creation of customer friendly webpages, as set out below.

15. PR And Marketing

- 15.1 It is proposed that a new set of webpages on the Council's website are dedicated to climate change, including the replication of the Climate

Change Action Plan. The webpages are ready to go live should the Council agree the Climate Change Action Plan.

16. Officer Comments

- 16.1 The expedient implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan will be crucial to delivering the Council's net zero 2030 target pledged in 2019 when the Climate Emergency was declared.

Annexes	Annex 1 – Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan Annex 2 – Surrey's Climate Change Strategy
Background Papers	Surrey Heath Climate Change Study prepared by Aecom – available at https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Surrey%20Heath%20Local%20Plan%20%20Climate%20Change%20Study.pdf
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