

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee
19 January 2022

Climate Change Working Group Update

Portfolio: Environment & Health
Strategic Director: Nick Steevens - Strategic Director, Environment & Community
Report Author: Anna Godleman – Climate Change Officer
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

Summary and purpose

The Climate Change Action plan was developed by the Planning Policy and Conservation Team in conjunction with the Climate Change Working Group following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in October 2019. 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.

Since the Climate Change Action Plan has been published, a number of actions have been progressed. The attached report at Annex A provides an update on progress of the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan, resourcing and priority. In addition, the table provides an update on progress for each Action and expected next steps, impact on achieving emissions reduction targets and Officers involved.

Recommendation

The Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee is advised to NOTE the Climate Change Action Plan Update Report and to make any observations.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 The Climate Change Action Plan was agreed by the Executive on the 16th March 2021.
- 1.2 The Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan has two key aims:
 - i) 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).
 - ii) 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.

- 1.3 In addition, reflecting the Five Year Strategy, delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan aims to achieve a 70% reduction in organisational carbon emissions by the end of the Five Year Strategy period.
- 1.4 The attached report at Annex A provides a tabulated update on the Climate Change Action Plan. The table includes a replication of Actions, resourcing and priority; and in addition provides an update and next steps, Officers involved and related impact on emissions reduction targets for each Action.
- 1.5 The Climate Change Action Plan is 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
- 1.6 To reflect the Council's levels of influence across the Borough, the actions within each of the six key areas has been separated into two categories:
- Council Operations: Actions that are directly within the scope of Surrey Heath Borough Council as an organisation (owned and operated building and assets).
 - Wider Borough: Actions to support and work with all other relevant organisations and individuals to significantly reduce emissions Surrey Heath.
- 1.7 The Actions in the plan cover a wide range of service areas and in some cases will require external funding to be delivered. As such, Actions have been categorised as follows:
- Within existing budgets - actions which can be delivered within existing budgets and resources at this stage.
 - Will require additional funding - actions which will require external funding (either through capital investment or grant funding) or additional resources to be delivered.
 - Likely to require additional funding - actions which will likely require external funding (either through capital investment or grant funding) or additional resources to be delivered.
- 1.8 Due to the wide range of actions it is necessary to prioritise actions based on their effectiveness and ease to undertake. Actions have been categorised as high, medium and low priority, in consultation with the Council's Climate Change Working Group.
- 1.9 The delivery of the Action Plan is connected to a rapidly evolving policy and funding environment. Therefore Officers will review actions every 3-6 months to include any funding and policy updates. In addition, co-ordination with Surrey County Council (SCC) will continue to be fed into the plan, to support wider Borough behaviour change and emission reduction, and deliver projects related to the SCC Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan as it progresses.

- 1.10 It is expected that Officers involved for the delivery of each Action will evolve as the Plan and related projects progress. The Climate Change Officer will coordinate delivery and provide support across all areas of the plan.
- 1.11 Due to the wide scope of Actions and varying themes, a colour code has been added to the table to identify how delivery of Actions relates to carbon reduction targets, and a description of expected impact. For example, many Actions relate to direct organisational emissions reduction and targets for net zero by 2030, others to wider emissions reduction and the net zero target of 2050. Some Actions have expected ecological benefits but no expected measurable impact in carbon reduction. The coding will aid in further understanding of Actions to achieve net zero goals.
- 1.12 Progress on the Climate Change Action Plan is monitored regularly and reported to the Climate Change Working Group and Corporate Management Team.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 Any recommendation from the Finance and Scrutiny Committee will be fed back to the Climate Change Working Group and the continued implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan.

3. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee may choose to make recommendations and comments on the Climate Change Action Plan Update Report attached as an annex to the report.

4. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy

- 4.1 Implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan will play a key contribution to delivery of the Five Year Strategy Actions, with a particular focus on Environment and Health priorities, most notably to:
- Achieve at least 70% net reduction in the Council's carbon emissions by the end of the Strategy.
 - Develop and deliver a credible pathway to being carbon neutral by 2030 in our estate and operations.
 - Improve energy efficiency and increase local renewable energy production to transition to net zero-carbon energy status.
 - Work with partners to support initiatives and infrastructure to increase the uptake of walking, cycling and public transport, and low emission vehicles.
 - Deliver improvements to green infrastructure across the Borough, increasing the potential of land, biodiversity, current and future woodland in the Borough to sequester and store carbon, e.g. promoting use of hedgerows.
 - Deliver actions that encourage and support steps being taken by local people within the community to tackle climate change.
 - Adapt our estate and operations to meet the challenges posed by climate change and set the standard for all sectors of our local community and new development, and existing housing stock, to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

- Identify a preferred partner to invest and deliver sustainable energy sources across the borough and reflect the need to establish sustainable energy sources into future Planning Policy.
- Change the Council's entire fleet of vehicles to electric and/or low/zero emission vehicles (where technology allows).
- Support the use of electric/low/zero emission vehicles across the rest of the borough, for example introducing electric charging points in Council car parks and supporting the installation of on-street charging points.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The Council has recruited a Climate Change Officer to take this work forward.
- 5.2 2022/2023 includes £45,000 for Climate Change Work.
- 5.3 Any capital funding required will be submitted to the Council for approval on a case for case basis.
- 5.4 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.

6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

- 6.1 Additional budgetary requests will have to be submitted in accordance with the Council's budget setting processes or as supplementary estimates. The Council is facing a severe budget gap over the medium term and therefore all expenditure decisions will have to be considered and approved on their own merits. Off-setting cost reductions and/or additional income would be expected with any increase in budgeted expenditure.

7. Legal and Governance Issues

- 7.1 There are no perceived legal or governance issues related to this update.

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

- 8.1 No comments.

9. Other Considerations and Impacts

Environment and Climate Change

- 9.1 The implementation of The Climate Change Action Plan will play a pivotal role in delivering the Council's net zero targets. There are numerous co-benefits of delivering climate change mitigation and adaptation, including supporting biodiversity and contributing to human health.

Equalities and Human Rights

- 9.2 Addressing equalities impact are considered on a project by project basis.

9.3 A key target is focusing on addressing fuel poverty within the Borough.

Risk Management

9.4 Risks are considered on a project by project basis.

Community Engagement

9.5 Communicating, educating, informing and mobilising action linked to the Council's Climate Change Plan will be vital to impact wider Borough emissions reduction and meet the 2050 net zero goals.

9.6 Engagement will be developed on a case for basis, aligned to ensure delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan reflects a 'listening' Council.

9.7 A set of webpages on the Council's website are dedicated to climate change, including the replication of the Climate Change Action Plan. There are regular communications across numerous channels on many of the Actions included in the plan and regular social media updates to strengthen climate change awareness and action.

Annexes

Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan Update Report

Background Papers

[Surrey Heath Borough Council Climate Change Action Plan](#)