

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Executive

19 July 2022

Climate Change Action Plan Update

Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Colin Dougan, Environment and Health
Strategic Director/Head of Service	Nick Steevens, Strategic Director, Environment & Community
Report Author:	Anna Godleman, Climate Change Officer
Key Decision:	No
Date Portfolio Holder Consulted	
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 six 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.

As noted in The Climate Change Action Plan, the challenges associated with addressing climate change are inherently complex and guidance and best practice is continually evolving as a result of changes in technology and our understanding of the issues. Therefore, the Climate Change Action Plan has been prepared as a document that can be updated, adapting to changing circumstances. This report recommends updates to be applied to the Climate Change Action Plan as it is published on the website and an update to the accessibility of the document.

In addition, since the Climate Change Action Plan has been published, a number of actions have been progressed. The attached report at Annex B provides an update table on the progress of the delivery with the recommendation that this is published as an appendix to the Climate Change Action Plan, with the view to update progress every 6 months and add further detail as projects develop through time. Furthermore as a priority, further milestones and target dates to be included in Annex B, in consultation with the Climate Change Working Group.

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE to

- (i) apply changes as outlined in this report to Annex A - Climate Change Action Plan and update the accessibility of the document;
- (ii) publish the Climate Change Action Plan Update table at Annex B on the Council's website as an Appendix to the Climate Change Action Plan by September 2022; and
- (iii) update progress at Annex B every 6 months.

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 As noted in The Climate Change Action Plan, the challenges associated with addressing climate change are inherently complex and guidance and best practice is continually evolving as a result of changes in technology and our understanding of the issues.

1.4 As consulted with the Climate Change Working Group, it is recommended to amend the Climate Change Action Plan with the changes outlined in this report to improve the plan and reflect updates such as the Councils declaration of an ecological emergency.

1.5 Annex A provides a copy of the Climate Change Action Plan as it is currently published on the website. The suggested amendments to this document that are recommended to be applied are as follows:

1.6 To remove the colour coding (green, orange, red) from the Priority column of the Action Plan table from pages 6 – 16.

1.7 To add the Ecological Emergency Declaration to Page 1

Ecological Emergency Declaration

On the 15th December 2021, the Council declared an 'Ecological Emergency' to accompany the Climate Emergency

- 1.8 To provide detail on the Ecological Emergency Declaration and commitments on Page 5.

Ecological Emergency Declaration

On the 15th December 2021, the Council declared an 'Ecological Emergency' to accompany the Climate Emergency.

In accordance the Council recognises that all tiers of local government are well placed to lead the way in reducing carbon emissions and tackling the ecological emergency as they have close links with their residents. Having already declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to carbon neutrality by 2030, it also recognises there is an ecological emergency. The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill highlights the urgency of the twin climate and ecological emergencies.

The Council commits to leading by example and promoting the good work it is currently undertaking. The Council will continue working with partners and volunteers locally and regionally to drive coordinated leadership and collaborative action to aid the recovery of nature and natural environments and identify areas for greater biodiversity.

The Council aims to ensure irreplaceable habitats are protected, that biodiversity mitigation hierarchy is followed and that biodiversity net gain is fully implemented.

The Council will be reviewing and implementing a borough-wide Tree Strategy; will continue to review Surrey Heath's Green Infrastructure Strategy, and ensure new developments contribute to increasing biodiversity and ecological improvement.

- 1.9 To update Action E9 on Page 7 to incorporate energy efficiency grants so that it reads as follows.

Work with businesses and citizens across Surrey Heath by providing information and advice on low-cost technologies to reduce energy consumption and promote access to energy efficiency grants.

- 1.10 In addition to reflect Action E9 as a High priority action.

- 1.11 To update Action B1 on Page 12 to enhance commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Increase and diversify our communications and engagement on climate change, to be accessible and inclusive to all communities in the Borough and direct resources towards engagement and behavioural change.

- 1.12 To update Action O10 on Page 15 to recognise co-benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Evaluate the need to develop a Surrey Heath Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan, seeking to understand most at risk of climate change and

recognising that mitigation and adaptation has potential co-benefits and connects to wider impacts on society such as health and wellbeing, fuel security, air quality and flood risk.

- 1.13 As well as the proposed amendments, the format of the Climate Change Action Plan document will be updated to meet the latest accessibility standards.
- 1.14 Since the Climate Change Action Plan has been published, there has been progress. The attached report at Annex B provides a tabulated update on the Climate Change Action Plan. The table includes a replication of Actions, resourcing and priority; as well as an update on milestones, progress and lead Officers involved¹. Looking ahead to the net zero target in 2030, a pathway of combined measures is in development to reduce the Council's operational emissions towards net zero. This will rely on investment, the availability of grant funding and the pace of progress in low carbon technology.
- 1.15 Progress on the Climate Change Action Plan will continue to be monitored regularly and reported to the Climate Change Working Group and Corporate Management Team.
- 1.16 Any further review and updates will be brought to the Climate Change Working Group and Executive where appropriate so that the Climate Change Action Plan continues to be a live and up to date document.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the changes to the Climate Change Action Plan are applied to Annex A and published on the website so that the Plan is improved and evolves responding to the surrounding context. It is also recommended that Annex B, and progress against Actions and the work of the Climate Change Working Group is published, and updated in a timely manner every 6 months, with the ability to add greater detail to the document such as emissions reduction data as projects progress in the future.

3. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Executive approve amendments to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, update accessibility, and support publication of the update table at Annex B. Alternatively the Executive can choose not to make the amendments or publish the update table.

4. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy

¹ 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.

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 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:

The financial implications in this report are within current approved budget allocations.

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

Annex A - Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan – Current Version

Annex B - Surrey Heath Climate Change Action Plan Update Table

Background Papers

[Surrey Heath Climate Change Study](#)