

For publication

Climate Change Action Plan

Meeting: Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum

Date: 17 September 2020

Cabinet portfolio: Health and Wellbeing

Report by: Assistant Director – Health and Wellbeing

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Purpose of reviewing the topic	To monitor the progress of the Climate Change Action Plan.
What are the objectives of the review?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand what engagement has taken place or is due to take place with other agencies.• To ensure that targets are met, to monitor the progress against the steps in the Plan and monitor costs to ensure they are not exceeding the budgets set in the Plan.• To understand what efforts are being made to influence partners and other organisations.• To review staffing resources assigned to this area of work.
Progress to date	This is a new item on the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum work programme 2020/21 but is connected to the previous 2019/20 work programme item, More Environmentally Friendly Council.

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency on the 17th July 2019 the details of which are outlined below;
- 1.2 This Council notes the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C', published in October 2018, which confirmed the catastrophic consequences of manmade climate change and the urgent need to act to address the marked increases that we are already seeing with regards higher sea levels, flooding, other extreme weather events, crop failures and destruction of land and marine eco-systems.

This Council therefore:

- (a) declares unequivocally that our town and borough, country and planet are facing a CLIMATE EMERGENCY;
- (b) agrees to establish a Chesterfield Climate Change working group to respond to this challenge, with representation from key borough stakeholders including our schools, college and university, the private sector and community and voluntary organisations, including Transition Chesterfield, Chesterfield Climate Alliance and young people's representative groups, with the shared purpose of enabling Chesterfield to become a low carbon, resilient and sustainable borough;
- (c) invites the working group to report back and make recommendations to Full Council on a realistic date for Chesterfield to be carbon neutral, and to develop a costed action plan, by March 2020, setting out the required work to achieve this outcome;

(d) resolves to work with other local authorities and public, private and voluntary sector partners on carbon reduction projects;

(e) calls on the Government to provide the necessary resources and powers for Chesterfield Borough Council to achieve its ambition of becoming a carbon neutral town and borough.

1.3 On the 26th February 2020 The Council approved and adopted the climate change action plan.

2.0 **Current position and key milestones**

2.1 The production of the action plan was the culmination of several months' worth of work by the climate change working group.

2.2 The working group was committed to making a difference and ensuring Chesterfield has an action plan that will result in a co-ordinated approach to support our low carbon ambitions.

2.3 The working group developed the action plan into eight themes, each theme has a series of actions which in total amount to thirty-nine specific actions to support our carbon reduction activities.

2.4 Even though the impact of Covid-19 started to manifest itself significantly in the United Kingdom from March 2020 it is pleasing to report that several positive actions have been progressed within the action plan.

2.5 Notable successes include;

2.6 In April 2020 the Council switched its electricity supply to renewable sources. The contract for supply runs for three years.

- 2.7 The Council's housing capital programme has commenced. In response to the climate emergency the council is committed to ensuring that its existing housing stock is as energy efficient as possible. Properties on the Grangewood estate (Birchwood Court, Grangewood Court, Longcroft Court, Thorntree Court and Stockwell Court) have benefited from upgrades to windows and insulation in each property and all communal areas to improve the thermal efficiency of the homes.
- 2.8 Private Sector Housing service have submitted a funding application into phase one of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme. The application is seeking to access £500,000 to enable some targeted support for owner occupied properties with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E or below and privately rented properties with an EPC of E or below or without an EPC. In addition to the carbon reduction benefits of this scheme, it will also target those most at risk of fuel poverty.
- 2.9 In addition, the Council is working with neighbouring authorities through the Local Authority Energy Partnership to develop an application for phase two Local Authority funding when this is released.
- 2.10 These funding applications complement the wider Green Homes Grant scheme applications that households can apply for directly from late September 2020. This fund provides £1.5 billion for individuals to apply for in the form of vouchers for their own properties. The council will support the awareness raising of this scheme to ensure as many residents as possible are able to take advantage of this funding given the carbon impact of the built environment in Chesterfield. More details of how this will work were released late last week on the government's BETA version website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-green-homes-grant-scheme>

- 2.11 Individuals can apply for the voucher from the end September via the government's Simple Energy Advice (SEA) website (previously the Energy Saving Trust) <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/pages/green-homes-grant> .
- 2.12 The Council is currently working with Low Carbon Homes, Derbyshire County Council, University of Derby - Sustainable Business and Clean Growth and other local district and borough councils to support a network of six national events designed to target retrofit for housing to improve thermal efficiencies to combat the fact that domestic property energy consumption equates to 14% of UK carbon emissions.
- 2.13 Low Carbon Homes as an organisation exists to reduce this impact and highlight the wider social and economic benefits of retrofitting existing housing which is why it was important for Chesterfield Borough Council to be leading the support for a Derbyshire Event.
- 2.14 The Derbyshire event is one of six events nationally;
- Derbyshire**, 06-08 October, hosted by Derbyshire County Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, South Derbyshire District Council and University of Derby
- Glasgow**, 20-22 October, hosted by Glasgow City Council
- Manchester**, 03-05 November, hosted by Manchester City Council
- Liverpool**, 01-03 December, hosted by Liverpool John Moores University
- Kent**, 26-28 January, hosted by Kent County Council
- Oxfordshire**, 09-11 February, hosted by Cosy Homes Oxfordshire

Further information is available at;
<https://www.lowcarbonhomes.uk/events/derbyshire-october-6-2020/>

- 2.15 In July 2020 the Council adopted the Chesterfield Economic Recovery Plan to support and rebuild Chesterfield's economy in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.16 Importantly and as outlined in the climate change action plan, the economic plan makes specific reference to sustainability in relation to economic recovery.
- 2.17 Activities under this plan help to demonstrate how the climate change action plan is being embedded across the council and includes; working with Derbyshire County Council and partners to develop an Integrated Transport Plan, the provision of cycle infrastructure and signposting businesses to low carbon business support activities being delivered by partners. In addition, Derbyshire County Council's Active Travel funding will be accessed to help fund a range of schemes.
- 2.18 The ambitions of the council in relation to active and sustainable travel has been supported through the adoption in July 2020 of the new Local Plan.
- 2.19 Our new Local Plan prioritises walking, with new development required to show that residents can walk and cycle to key facilities and providing for alternative forms of transport in the form of new cycleways and better footpaths through a levy on all new housing development.
- 2.20 Activities regarding the Councils parks and open spaces has continued with one thousand trees already purchased and `heeled in` at Eastwood Park ready for planting this season.

- 2.21 It is anticipated that during this financial year 2020/21 and using the budget allocated within the climate change action plan, the planting of three to four thousand trees is a reasonable expectation for this autumn/winter planting season.
- 2.22 Colleagues in the Parks and Open Spaces team are meeting with The Tree Council later this month with the ambition of setting up a Tree Warden scheme. Whilst this is a voluntary role it will be vital in developing our tree planting resources as well as keeping the Council up to date with current thinking.
- 2.23 In July and August 2020, the Council embarked on the recruitment process for the Climate Change Officer. This was a successful process and an appointment was made. Pre employment checks are currently being completed and it is anticipated that the successful candidate will be in post from early October 2020.
- 2.24 The post holder will be a valuable resource for the Council to support the continued delivery and development of the climate change action plan.
- 2.25 A working draft of a new format for Cabinet Reports is currently in the final stages of development that will ensure that climate change implications have been considered as part of the formal decision-making process.
- 2.26 The new report format is a key part of the Councils approach to ensuring climate change impact is embedded across the authority.

3.0 **Barriers/obstacles**

- 3.1 Despite the restrictions and challenges from Covid-19 there have been some significant developments across key actions within the climate change action plan.
- 3.2 Covid-19 remains a significant risk to the Council as a whole, however at this stage several of the actions within the climate change action plan have been able to progress which is positive.
- 3.3 Further work will be undertaken with the Climate Change Officer regarding a risk matrix in relation to the climate change action plan.
- 3.4 The successful appointment of the Climate Change Officer will significantly increase the capacity of the Council to drive forward its ambitions in relation to carbon reduction and sustainability.
- 3.5 An operational budget for the Climate Change Officer in support of the action plan is in place.

4.0 **Future plans**

- 4.1 The climate change action plan will continue to be delivered; the new Climate Change Officer significantly enhances the capacity of the Council to support the plan and will monitor progress and development accordingly.
- 4.2 The impact of Covid-19 will continue to be monitored with regards to the wider impact on the Council and any specific impacts in relation to the Climate Change Action Plan.
- 4.3 On the 19th August 2020, the government set out how it will use ambitious and legally binding targets under its

Environment Bill to combat environmental and climate challenges.

4.4 The government has announced it will introduce at least one long term target in four priority areas to drive significant and lasting environmental improvement, these being; cleaner air, cleaner water, less waste and more biodiversity.

4.5 The Council will monitor the progress of this Bill, however undoubtedly local authorities will have a key role to play in helping to deliver the type of priority targets outlined above.

4.6 It is therefore important that the Council maintain an awareness of what governments priorities and reflect on these in relation to further development of the Climate Change Action plan and targets.

5.0 **Conclusion**

5.1 Positive progress has been made on the Councils Climate Change Action Plan, despite the pressures and challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.2 A range of key actions have been progressed since the action plan was formally adopted by the Council in late February 2020.

5.3 Work on the plan will continue, with the new Climate Change Officer bringing expert knowledge, skills and experience to support the Councils ambitions regarding carbon reduction and sustainability.

6.0 **Suggested scrutiny activity**

6.1 No additional activity is suggested; having this scrutiny forum for the Climate Change Action Plan is an

important part of the monitoring and development of the plan that will ensure it remains current and relevant.

Document information

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Background documents		
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.		
N/A		
Appendices to the report		
Appendix A	N/A	