

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Director of Transformation and Governance

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Date: 23 February 2023

Climate Change Action Plan

Executive Summary

On 23 July 2019, at a meeting of Full Council, Guildford Borough Council:

1. Formally declared a Climate Emergency that requires urgent action.
2. Called on the UK government to provide the powers, resources and funding support to make local, as well as national, action against climate change possible.
3. Committed to working with partners across the Borough to evaluate and determine how and when Guildford Borough could become carbon neutral, with a target goal of 2030 for reaching net zero emissions.
4. Committed to working towards making the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030.
5. Committed to establishing the necessary governance structures, investment plans and officer resources in order for the Council to build a strong foundation to deliver progressively ambitious carbon reductions across our operations.
6. Committed to establishing a borough-wide Climate Change Partnership consisting of representatives from all stakeholders across all sectors.
7. Committed to developing, within 12 months, a clear action plan and timescale for being net-zero carbon across our Council operations, starting with a review of what has already been achieved and plans already instigated.
8. Committed to delivering a joint Member-Officer training programme to enable a shared understanding of how to deliver the above, starting in September 2019.

Building on the high-level plan that was previously agreed by this report recommends a detailed action plan for adoption.

Recommendation to Executive

That the Executive

1. Notes, as set out in paragraph 6.2, that the indicative forecast of the cost to achieving net zero across Guildford Borough Council for Scope 1 and 2 emissions (as calculated by consultants APSE Energy in July 2022) is £58.6 million and the total annual savings achieved by 2030 would be equivalent of £962,900 per year.
2. Asks officers to explore how these costs can be met in the short (0-2.5 Years), medium (2.5–5 Years) and long term (5–7 years) and to bring forward further proposals in this respect as part of GBC Annual Budget processes (for example through direct funding, match funding, invest-to-save proposals or borrowing).
3. Endorses the Climate Change Action Plan attached as Annexe 1 as the Council's high level strategic plan for responding to the climate emergency.
4. Notes that the delivery of the actions within the plan will be contingent on identifying and securing the requisite funding and resources and on the development of further detailed plans and feasibility studies; and
5. Requests annual updates on the plan in terms of progress and any recommended changes to the structure or content of the plan brought forward by officers or the climate change board.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

The action plan enables the Council to progress the climate change programme in accordance with Council strategic priorities and the declared climate emergency of 2019.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 When it formally declared a climate emergency on 23 July 2019, Guildford Borough Council made a number of commitments as listed above. One of those was to develop a clear action plan for achieving net-zero carbon across Council operations. The purpose of the report is to propose a programme of actions to enable GBC to achieve net zero by 2030 in accordance with the Climate Emergency Declaration. The Action Plan includes the development of programmes to encourage and facilitate a reduction of borough-wide carbon emissions, aiming to achieve net-zero by

2050, in accordance with the Climate Change Act 2019. The Action Plan includes actions to develop programmes in response to current environmental changes caused by climate change and improve environmental resilience across the Borough of Guildford. The Executive are asked to approve the recommended actions as laid out in appendix 1.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The action plan detailed in Appendix 1 supports many of GBC's strategic priorities including:

Homes and Jobs

- Provide and facilitate housing that people can afford – through implementing and accessing funding streams to enable homeowners and residents to reduce fuel costs by creating more sustainable, well insulated, and energy efficient homes.
- Create employment opportunities through regeneration – through actions that develop the emerging 'green' economy and encouraging climate change innovation within the commercial and industrial sector.
- Support high quality development of strategic sites – by providing clear guidance and access to funding to foster sustainable and energy efficient developments.
- Support our business community and attract new inward investment – enabling access to national funding to develop sustainable solutions to climate change challenges.
- Maximise opportunities for digital infrastructure improvements and smart places technology – by supporting the private sector to develop the digital infrastructure across Guildford and the wider area.

Environment

- Provide leadership in our own operations by reducing carbon emissions, energy consumption and waste
- Engage with residents and businesses to encourage them to act in more environmentally sustainable ways through their waste, travel, and energy choices
- Work with partners to make travel more sustainable and reduce congestion
- Make every effort to protect and enhance our biodiversity and natural environment.

Community

- Tackling inequality in our communities – through actions that help residents improve the efficiency of their properties and focusing on reducing fuel poverty.
- Work with communities to support those in need – by developing a holistic approach to increasing resilience within the community through schemes that focus on reducing food poverty, fuel poverty and encouraging inclusion within communities through support of existing organisations.
- Support the unemployed back into the workplace and facilitate opportunities for residents to enhance their skills – supporting the development of ‘green’ skills and encouraging the development of the green economy.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2019, Guildford Borough Council declared a climate emergency. In response to this declaration, GBC committed to reducing carbon emission across its activities with an aim to achieve net zero by 2030. Surrey County Council (SCC) and many neighbouring districts and boroughs have also committed to reduce carbon emissions from their organisations with the aim of achieving net zero by 2050.
- 3.2 The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) publishes an annual report of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The data is a subset of the UK GHG Inventory. Data from 2019 show that the total emissions for the Guildford area were in excess of 766.8 ktCO₂e. Transportation contributes to 51% of GHG emissions across the borough. It is important to note that Transport is outside of direct control of Guildford Borough Council. Domestic emissions contribute to a further 27%. Industry and Commercial combined make up a further 13%. Public Sector emissions contribute to 5% of the boroughs emissions, with GBC directly responsible for approximately one percent of borough wide emissions. (For further details of borough emissions please see Appendix 1).
- 3.3 GBC had developed a high-level Action Plan which was adopted in 2021.
- 3.4 An Action Plan is required to identify and prioritise those areas where programmes can be introduced to reduce carbon emissions and to allow for forward planning for the allocation of resources and funding.
- 3.5 The ‘Greener Futures’ Programme is a county wide strategy developed by Surrey County Council. The programme sets out a wide range of priorities tailored to reducing carbon emissions across the county. Guildford Borough Council have identified the need for a targeted climate change action plan to address specific challenges within the Guildford area.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 The Climate Change Board (CCB) have been consulted on the actions and principles contained in Appendix 1. The CCB is made up of Councillors, Officers, and leading members of the community with a view to informing the direction that the Council will take in regard to climate change. Comments from the CCB have been collated and integrated into Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Climate Change Officers have discussed the principles of the Action Plan with the Portfolio Holder for climate change to determine the principles and scope of the actions contained within Appendix 1.
- 4.3 A review of the Surrey Greener Futures Delivery Plan and its impact on existing GBC service plans was discussed with Council Officers and presented to the Corporate Management Board.

5. Key Risks

- 5.1 The key risks are high costs and uncertainty over government policy. The Council's existing risk management and programme delivery processes will be used to track and manage associated risks with the delivery of the action plan. Failure to engage with the local community will result in a loss of public support for the required changes necessary for carbon reduction. Similarly, lack of engagement will result in missed opportunities for funding, resource sharing, and creating strong partnerships within the community to reduce carbon emissions across the borough.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Achieving net zero by 2030 is a corporate policy as is ensuring Guildford is financially sound with infrastructure and services fit for the future. Some of the actions contained within the Climate Change Action Plan will require significant financial investment. However, in many cases there will be an associated return of investment from energy savings. Each action will need to be assessed on its own merit and a programme developed to achieve the aim of the action. This is to include the financial implications and identification of funding streams.

6.2 Cost Projection

Based on a trajectory analysis carried out by APSE Energy in July 2022, the indicative forecast of the cost to achieving net zero across Guildford Borough Council for Scope 1 and 2 emissions is £58.6 million and the total annual savings achieved by 2030 would be equivalent of £962,900 per year. While this cost is significant, it is noted the information used to estimate the capital cost is not complete and that a separate exercise should take place to review all existing council owned vehicles and assets

to provide a clear plan of what interventions can be provided, their capital costs, funding opportunities and the cost/carbon savings.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 No legal implications apply to the climate change action plan however each action will need to be assessed on its own merits.

8. Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 No HR implications apply to the climate change action plan however each action will need to be assessed on its own merits.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 The Action Plan sets out a pathway to achieve net zero carbon emissions however it does not stipulate the individual processes for each programme to achieve these actions, where required, individual projects, initiatives and policies will be assessed for their equality impact on a case-by-case basis

10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 10.1 The Climate Change Action Plan sets out a number of actions that GBC should progress in order to tackle the challenges set by climate change. Agreement of the report itself does not have any implications with regards to climate change, the actions therein will affect the following:

- carbon emissions
- energy use
- waste / recycling
- air quality
- water supply/conservation
- flood / climate resilience
- procurement (economic, social and environmental, community well-being)
- biodiversity
- public health of communities
- collaboration with statutory partners, agencies and/or businesses to tackling climate change

Careful consideration will be needed to assess the impact of each action and identify any conflicts between the above categories.

11. Executive Advisory Board comments

11.1 This report was considered by the Joint Executive Advisory Board on Monday 13 February 2023. The comments arising from that meeting are to follow.

12. Summary of Options

Option 1. Take no action – GBC does not adopt a climate change action plan.

Option 2. Take Action– GBC adopts an action plan which focuses on reducing carbon emissions directly controlled by GBC and seeks to address opportunities for addressing climate change on a wider scale, including incorporating the principles set out in Surrey's Greener Futures Delivery Plan.

13. Conclusion

13.1 The Climate Change Action Plan sets out a pathway to achieve the aims of the Climate Emergency which was declared by Guildford Borough Council on 23rd July 2019. The Action Plan seeks to facilitate forward planning for the allocation of resources and funding by identifying and prioritising those areas where programmes can be introduced to reduce carbon emissions.

13.2 The Action Plan supports several GBC's strategic priorities, including:

- Homes and Jobs
- Environment and,
- Community

13.3 2019 data published by BEIS show that the total emissions for the Guildford area were more than 766.8 ktCO₂e. Guildford Borough Council is directly responsible for 1% of carbon emissions within Guildford Borough.

13.4 There are significant financial implications associated with achieving net zero by 2030, however, the forecast provided by APSE uses incomplete information to produce an estimate of the costs. A review of all existing council owned vehicles and assets is to be undertaken to provide a clear plan of what interventions can be provided, their capital costs, funding opportunities and the true cost/carbon savings.

14. Background Papers

Guildford Borough Council Net Zero Carbon Emissions Trajectory Rev. C, APSE, July 2022

15. Appendices

Guildford Borough Council Climate Change Action Plan V.1.7