

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Communities  (Introduced by Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Health and Wellbeing))	Cabinet  Full Council	Wednesday, 13 July 2022 Wednesday, 20 July 2022

## Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan Update, inc. Annual Green House Gas Update

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide members an update on the work undertaken with regard to the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan.

### Recommendations to Cabinet

2. That members note the work undertaken by the cross-party Climate Emergency Task Group.
3. That members note the current carbon footprint of both the Council and the borough.
4. That members note the actions and progress made towards the Climate Emergency and Air Quality Action Plans and wider agenda.
5. That Council be recommended to approve the updated Climate Emergency Strategy.

### Recommendations to Council

6. That members note the work undertaken by the cross-party Climate Emergency Task Group.
7. That members note the current carbon footprint of both the Council and the borough.

8. That members note the actions and progress made towards the Climate Emergency and Air Quality Action Plans and wider agenda.
9. That Members approve the updated Climate Emergency Strategy.

### **Reasons for recommendations**

10. In July 2019 the Council declared that the effect of climate change within the borough poses an immediate danger to the Health and Wellbeing of our residents. To combat this threat the Council declared a Climate Emergency and set a goal of rendering the borough net-carbon neutral by the year 2030.
11. The effects of climate change are still identified nationally and internationally as one of the biggest threats to humankind and the wider environment. The issue has also grown in understanding, acceptance and importance over the last year in public, political and business worlds.
12. A cross-party Climate Emergency Task Group was formed to work with officers to achieve this goal. The Task Group have met regularly to move this agenda forward.
13. In July 2020 members approved and adopted a Climate Emergency Strategy. The Strategy, Appendix 1, provided background to the Climate Emergency issue, our current position in terms of the Council and the borough and identified categories of areas to concentrate on to achieve the overall goal of net-carbon neutral by 2030.
14. Members were also given a commitment by the Task Group that the strategy would be reviewed and revised each year, including an update on the current carbon footprint and work undertaken.
15. This Strategy was updated and presented to Full Council in July 2021 and has again been updated and is presented within this report. As the original Climate Emergency Strategy was approved by Full Council, the revised strategy also needs to be approved.
16. In July 2021, following the adoption of the Climate Emergency Strategy a Climate Emergency Action Plan was approved at Full Council, detailing some of the measures that would be taken to achieve the Council's goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. This Action Plan complements the existing Air Quality Action Plan. This report contains an overview of the progress that has been achieved against these action plans and some detail of the challenges that are still faced.

### **Other options considered and rejected**

17. None, a commitment was given by the Task Group and accepted by Full Council that the strategy would be reviewed, and an update given each year along with progress on the overarching goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

## Executive summary

18. This report presents, for members consideration and approval an updated Climate Emergency Strategy. This Strategy provides an update on changes within the borough over the last year along with a revision of the stated goals, objectives and limitations of the group.
19. An update on the actions taken over the year is also presented for members consideration.
20. The Climate Emergency group made a commitment to review the Climate Emergency Strategy, when it was first adopted, and this revision has been produced along with an updated carbon footprint calculation.

## Corporate priorities

21. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (please bold all those applicable):

<b>An exemplary council</b>	<b>Thriving communities</b>
<b>A fair local economy that works for everyone</b>	<b>Good homes, green spaces, healthy places</b>

## Background to the report

### Climate Emergency

22. The effects of man-made climate change are identified as one of, if not the biggest, threat to humankind and the wider environment. Understanding, acceptance and desire for action to combat this threat has grown over the last few years.
23. In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report which advised that we must limit global warming to 1.5°C, as opposed to the previous target of 2°C. Their review of over 6,000 sources of evidence found that, with a rise of 1.5°C, there would be risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth. It warned that we have only 12 years left within which to take the serious action required to avert this crisis and avoid the worst impacts.
24. The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed that the global warming target of 1.5°C will be exceeded within the next 20 years, with escalating and compounding impacts on extreme weather events, flooding, climate refugees, food production and the spread of disease.
25. In 2021 the IPCC issued a new report stating *“it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, oceans and cryosphere and biosphere have occurred.”*
26. It continues by identifying that *“global temperature rises will continue throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century under all modelled scenarios and a global temperature of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21<sup>st</sup> century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decade”*

27. It is imperative that humans take all possible action to limit the impacts of the above events. The Council as a social leader, regulator, employer and developer has a moral and legal duty to minimise its emissions and impact on the environment, prepare for the impact of climate change, adapt and encourage others to do the same.
28. Please note that this document refers to emissions of “carbon” or “carbon dioxide”. This should be considered shorthand for all greenhouse gas emissions, not just carbon dioxide.
29. In parallel, the UK Climate Change Act 2008 established the National Adaptation Programme. The corresponding UK Climate Change Risk Assessment identifies 6 priority risk areas: flooding, high temperatures, water supply shortages, natural capital, food production; and pest and diseases.
30. In July 2019 this Council declared that the effect of climate change within the borough poses an immediate danger to the health and well-being of our residents and therefore proclaimed a Climate Emergency with immediate effect.
31. To combat this threat, the Council set a goal of rendering the borough carbon neutral by the year 2030, against 1990 emission figures. For avoidance of doubt, this goal means the borough shall produce no net carbon emissions by this date, taking into account actions that have the effect of removing carbon from the environment.
32. In order to implement this decision, a Standing Working Group on the Climate Emergency was created. A scoping document was prepared, presented to and agreed by members along with an interim action plan.
33. In July 2020 members approved and adopted a Climate Emergency Strategy. The strategy provides details and background to the Climate Emergency crisis, sets the definition of the Council’s overall goal in relation to the Climate Emergency, presents the calculated carbon footprint for both the Council operations and the borough. The strategy identifies five categories on which any future actions would be aligned to assist with achieving the net carbon neutral goal.
34. These categories are;
  - Transport
  - Energy and Built Environment
  - Waste and water
  - Consumption
  - Resilience – preparing for the consequences of climate change
35. The Task Group also committed to providing a yearly update to Full Council on the progress being made. A revised Strategy and Green House Gas Emissions inventory was presented to and adopted by Full Council in July 2021. This report provides a further revision to the strategy.

## **The Revised Strategy**

36. It goes without saying that the last 24 months have been difficult due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and moving the overall Climate Emergency agenda forward has been hampered by some of the restrictions imposed on the population.
37. However, the Task Group have met regularly, and progress has been made. In July 2021 a Climate Emergency Action Plan was formally adopted by Full Council. Details of the works undertaken are included within the attached actions and progress update, July 2022.
38. The revised strategy is attached in Appendix 1 of this report.
39. There have been no fundamental changes to the previously achieved aims and objectives of the Strategy.
40. The report highlights that the Carbon emissions for the Council have increased over the year. This is primarily due to the fact that the Leisure Centres have been taken back in-house and the increase was therefore expected. The centres were excluded from the calculation in previous years, as the required data on energy usage was not available while the external operator was in place.
41. As members will be aware work is currently progressing to decarbonise these centres and thus reduce the associated carbon emissions significantly. This will result in a reduction in the carbon emission from 2023/24 onwards.
42. Looking at the borough as a whole, new baseline data from central government has been released in 2021 covering the years 2005-2019. This has been reviewed and the boroughs footprint calculated confirming that the carbon footprint for the borough has continued to reduce over the year.

## **Air Quality**

43. Much of the work on air quality is linked to that being undertaken for Climate Emergency with both areas looking at similar outcomes.
44. The Council currently has five declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) all of which have been declared for the likely exceedance of the annual mean Nitrogen Dioxide Emissions value of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>.
45. The Council has continued to monitor air quality across the borough through the network of diffusion tubes, and following additional funding obtained towards the end of 2021 has now employed a further three continuous analysers. These allow the monitoring of Particulate Matter in addition to Nitrogen Dioxide.
46. Monitoring results indicate that pollutant levels across the borough are generally declining and while only a short data set is currently available from the continuous monitors the data suggests that the particulate matter levels are not currently at significantly high enough levels to require any formal action by the Council.

47. It is hoped that following the complete 2022 monitoring dataset we will be in a position to revoke at least one, and possibly two of the declared AQMA's. This may have been undertaken sooner however due to the pandemic and changes within the areas this has been delayed.
48. It is also planned to carry out a further consultation in 2023 to revise the Air Quality Action Plan.

### **Progress to date**

49. Since the last update to members in July 2021, the following key areas of progress have been made, additional information on progress and actions taken are included within Appendix 2.
50. The £145,004 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, Round 1 grant work to the Civic Centre has been completed. This has provided additional solar panels to the roof and associated battery storage, LED lighting throughout the building, a building management system to provide more control over the heating and improved hot water dispensers on each floor.
51. The £106,000 OLEV rapid charger electric vehicle points have been installed across the borough, providing four 50KWh rapid chargers.
52. Decarbonisation plans have been completed for the majority of the remaining Council estate following the successful bid for £223,000 of Low Carbon Skills Funding. Work on reviewing the outcomes of these reports is ongoing with a view to applying for additional decarbonisation funding.
53. A project funded by a £45,000 grant for enforcement of the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations has been completed. This has identified all registered properties within the borough with an EPC rating below E, the current minimum requirement for the rental sector and has resulted in over 100 being improved. Saving both carbon emissions and assisting residents with more affordable accommodation.
54. We have secured £4,968,855 of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Round 3 funding to undertake works to the four Leisure Centres, Moss Side Depot and the Civic Centre to remove gas heating and improve energy efficiency and increase our use of renewable energy sources.
55. We have employed a Climate Emergency Engagement Officer to facilitate improved communication between the Council and interested parties, e.g. schools, friends groups, businesses and internally over the Climate Emergency, Air Quality and Biodiversity agendas.
56. We have secured an additional £142,500 OLEV grant funding to install 19 electric vehicle on-street charging points across the borough.

57. The Council has achieved its objective of planting over 110,000 trees (one for each resident), a year ahead of the projected completion date, with a further 27,000 trees to be planted in this financial year.
58. A communication plan has been devised to ensure regular climate emergency related information is provided to the public.

### **Climate change and air quality**

59. The work noted in this report impacts on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda: net carbon zero by 2030, reducing waste production, limiting non sustainable forms of transport, working with sustainable and green accredited companies, limiting or improving air quality, limiting water waste and flooding risks, improving green areas and biodiversity.

### **Equality and diversity**

60. The revised strategy does not have any equality or diversity impacts associated with it. It is acknowledged that the wider work being undertaken on the climate emergency agenda may have impacts that need to be addressed as the work progresses.

### **Risk**

61. Climate change is one of the biggest if not the biggest threat to human-kind (if action is not taken now). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has identified that we must prevent a 1.5°C rise in global temperatures to prevent a significant risk to risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth.
62. The Council has made a commitment to achieving a net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, along with a commitment to review the Climate Emergency Strategy and provide an update on the Council's current carbon footprint. Failure to understand the current situation and the level of carbon emissions being generated by the Council and the borough will hamper any attempts to achieve this goal.
63. The revised strategy and associated greenhouse gas emissions report is therefore a key component to achieving this overarching goal and minimising the risk to both council and the borough as a whole from the impacts of climate change.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

64. There are no direct financial implications of this report. Monitoring of the various grants and funding for Climate Emergency form part of the regular capital and revenue budget monitoring.

## Comments of the Monitoring Officer

65. There are no concerns from a legal perspective with this report. The report is primarily for the purposes of providing members with an update of the actions and progress that have been made with regard to addressing Climate Emergency issues. Approval is also sought for an updated strategy.

## Background documents

Climate Emergency Strategy revised July 2021

Climate Emergency Action Plan, July 2021

Air Quality Action Plan, 2018

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Revised Climate Emergency Strategy, July 2022

Appendix 2 – Actions and Progress update, July 2022

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