

CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF STRATEGIC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

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| Cabinet Member & Portfolio | Cllr Eddie Lavery Cabinet Member for Residents' Services |
| Responsible Officer | Corporate Director of Central Services |
| Report Author & Directorate | Ian Thynne Environmental Specialists, Central Services |
| Papers with report | Climate Action Plan review (circulated separately, group offices & online copies) Consultation Strategy |

HEADLINES

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| Summary | <p>The Council declared a climate emergency in 2020 and followed this with the adoption of the comprehensive Strategic Climate Action Plan. 'The Plan' contains 6 corporate commitments aligned with 9 Key Themes to cover a wide range of action to address the climate emergency. A review of the plan in 2024 formed part of the commitment.</p> <p>'The Review' sets out the action to be taken over the next 3 years (identified as the short to medium term). It retains the vision, corporate commitments and key themes but sets out an amended series of actions to continue to positively tackle the climate emergency in a more focused and targeted manner.</p> <p>The Review also sets out the progress since the adoption of the Plan noting the challenging environment facing all Local Authorities. It identifies significant progress against the majority of the Key Themes and also where further development is required. It also reports on the Council's own positive progress towards its Carbon Neutral target.</p> <p>The Review is intended to be consulted upon, amended to reflect responses where necessary, returned to Cabinet, with the intention of adoption for the start of the 2025 financial year.</p> |
| Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026 | <p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live in a sustainable borough that is carbon neutral</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Green and Sustainable Borough</p> |

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| <p>Financial Cost</p> | <p>The production of the review has been developed using existing internal resources as well as consultancy support to review carbon footprint data. The consultancy support has been funded by Section 106 (carbon) funds.</p> <p>The Review commits to actions that are in line with business-as-usual approaches to tackle climate action, with additional funding from external sources, i.e. Section 106 funds.</p> <p>Action to reduce the carbon footprint will ultimately result in more efficient Council operations with projects prioritised that have the additional benefit of reducing exposure to energy costs or are income generators (i.e. solar panel installations, improved building efficiency, and energy saving measures).</p> |
| <p>Relevant Select Committee</p> | <p>Residents' Services Select Committee</p> |
| <p>Relevant Ward(s)</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the Strategic Climate Action Plan Review to be consulted upon.**
- 2) Approves the Consultation Strategy and for the public consultation to be undertaken in accordance with it.**

Reasons for recommendation

The Council declared a climate emergency in 2020 and responded by producing the Strategic Climate Action Plan ('the Plan') which was adopted in 2021. The Plan included a commitment to undertake a review in 2024.

This commitment was to ensure that continued action remains focused, prioritised and aligned with the Vision and Corporate Commitments set out in the Plan. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on how best to target current resources to maximise effective action.

The commitment also required the review to be subject to public consultation to allow residents, communities and other stakeholders to actively engage in the future actions to address the climate emergency.

Alternative options considered / risk management

It is considered that a 'business as usual' approach, (i.e. retaining the current Plan and not undertaking a review) would still result in effective climate action but it would not necessarily be a targeted or efficient use of resources available. This approach would also be inconsistent with the commitments made in the original Plan.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage. The Residents' Services Select Committee will be engaged in the consultation on the Plan at its meeting in November. Additionally, through the Terms of Reference of the Committee there is strong overview and scrutiny of the Council's climate change efforts. The select committee has previously scrutinised the Plan annually and is programmed to continue this actively into the future.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. On 16th January 2020 at full Council, the London Borough of Hillingdon declared a climate emergency. The impetus for the declaration was a petition from residents and Member recognition of the global and local issues associated with climate change. The declaration impacted council business across all departments as it looks for ways to adapt and mitigate for climate change.
2. The Adoption of the Strategic Climate Action Plan followed in 2021 and set out how the Council would respond to the climate emergency. This included a series of corporate commitments aligned with 9 key themes which would heavily influence Council wide operations. The Plan included a series of specific actions linked to the themes. These were comprehensive and ambitious.
3. The declaration and subsequent plan also heavily influenced the subsequent Council Strategy which states:

Hillingdon will be a sustainable, carbon-neutral borough, protecting Hillingdon's heritage, built environment and valued green spaces. Residents will live in pleasant neighbourhoods with access to sustainable waste management and transport.

4. The Plan included a commitment to undertake a review of the actions in 2024.

Need for Continued Action

5. As part of the Review, it has been necessary to restate the need for continued action. Although the Plan set out a great deal of progress across a range of Council operations, it also stated why further action and progress was needed.
6. Since the Plan was adopted, more information and understanding about the impacts of climate change have emerged. The climate continues to warm at significant rates with 2022 and 2023 the warmest years on record. In 2023, the UK recorded the wettest September to December period since 2000 with a sequence of named storms.

7. More information is also now available on the impacts of climate change and how this affects all communities but particularly the most vulnerable. Risks to water supply, localised flooding, loss of biodiversity, heat stress and uncertain food security are among some of the impacts associated with a changing climate. The environmental and social impacts are considered to result in significant economic disruption.
8. The Review therefore presents the need for continued and sustained action.

Progress

9. The Review also presents the opportunity to set out how much progress has been made in the last 3 years against the commitments made.
10. It records positive progress against the majority of the 9 key themes with further development required against two (i.e. where progress is less than positive). The Review recognises that progress has been complicated by the challenging circumstances facing all Local Authorities but still reports very positive performance

| Key Theme | Progress Recorded |
|--|----------------------|
| Community Leadership | Moderate |
| The Council's Own Operations | Very Positive |
| Building Better Places | Very Positive |
| Using and Producing Clean and Green Energy | Positive |
| Waste Management | Very Positive |
| Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation | Positive |
| Carbon Offsetting | Positive |
| Sustainable Transportation | Positive |
| Transparency, Communication and Reporting | Development Required |

11. Progress has been particularly positive in relation to our commitment to become Carbon Neutral. It sets out a 54% reduction in our own emissions from the 2020 baseline reported in the original Plan. This is a significant achievement and reflects considerable work to improve the fleet and reduce emissions across Council assets.
12. Importantly, the most recent Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) work at the Civic Centre is forecast to make a significant contribution to carbon reduction. The Civic Centre is the asset with by far the largest carbon footprint and the PSDS project will reduce this by nearly 50% once complete and operational.
13. The Review also considers wider actions committed to in the original Plan and records significant progress and where further actions should be targeted.

14. Considerable progress is particularly noted in relation to the management of waste, flood risk, green spaces and new development. Areas requiring more development include engagement with schools, biodiversity planning and in relation to the transparency, communication and reporting of progress.

Action Plan

15. The Review has identified that the direction of travel set out in 2021 remains broadly the correct one with many of the objectives still relevant, appropriate and sufficiently challenging. Inevitably there are some amendments in order to prioritise resources where maximum benefit can be achieved.

16. The Review therefore concludes with setting out the Actions to be taken over the next 3 years to achieve the Vision and Corporate Commitments. The table above shows where further targeted action would be required with particular attention on work with school and young people (Community Leadership Theme) which was a key part of the original plan.

17. It is recommended that there is a reduced range of actions with those remaining to be more targeted and focused to make an efficient use of the resource available. The Review is not therefore intended to report on what is not going to be taken forward, but to focus on the priority actions over the next three years.

Review

18. The Plan will continue to be kept under review with an annual progress report submitted every autumn in addition to scrutiny by the Residents' Services Select Committee. This allows the actions to be revised and added to as and when appropriate.

Financial Implications

The targeted actions over the next three years are intended to reflect current workstreams and objectives in line with the Council Strategy; all in line with current budgets. Council Resources along with external funding, for example through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Section 106, will be accessed to deliver projects that are deemed to result in meaningful outputs. Below is a breakdown of the Investment in Carbon Initiatives to date and funding yet to be allocated.

Investment in Carbon Initiatives to date

| Programme | Project | Total Project Budget £000 | S106 Funding £000 | PSDS Funding £000 | Council Resources Funding £000 |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Carbon Initiative Programme | Carbon Initiatives Programme - Park Lodge Solar Farm | 565 | 0 | 0 | 565 |

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|-----------------------------|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Carbon Initiative Programme | Carbon Initiatives Programme - Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Civic Centre Winston Churchill Hall Highgrove Leisure Centre Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Centre | 19,542 | 2,263 | 13,750 | 3,529 |
| Carbon Initiative Programme | Carbon Initiatives Programme - London Environment Directors Network | 80 | | | 80 |
| Corporate Property of Works | Grainges, Cedars and Blyth Road Car Parks - installation of Cummulite Emergency Lighting Systems | 762 | 281 | | 481 |
| Civic Centre Transformation | Mezzanine, Basement and Members Car Parks - installation of Cummulite Emergency Lighting Systems | 566 | | | 566 |
| Civic Centre Transformation | Installation of Commulite emergency lighting system at the Civic Centre Service tunnels below the building | 86 | | | 86 |
| Carbon Offset Officer | Carbon Offset Officer | 59 | 59 | | |
| Total | | 21,660 | 2,603 | 13,750 | 5,307 |

Budget Allocated for Carbon Initiatives yet to be identified and developed

| Programme | Project | Total Project Budget £000 | S106 Funding £000 | PSDS Funding £000 | Council Resources Funding £000 |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Section 106 carbon reduction | Programmes to be developed | 4,400 | 4,400 | | |
| Carbon Initiative Programme | Carbon Initiatives unallocated Programmes to be developed | 4,813 | | | 4,813 |
| Total | | 9,213 | 4,400 | 0 | 4,813 |

To date £21,660k has been invested in Carbon Initiative schemes. Currently the Council holds £4,400k unallocated Section 106 carbon reduction funds along with £4,813k of Council Resources that can be drawn-down against and used towards schemes that will enable to deliver the strategic climate action plan.

The commencement of an extensive school engagement and carbon reduction project is included in the recommended actions for 2025/26 subject to funding from Section 106 resources.

Over the last three financial years, the very positive progress made (referenced in points 10. and 14. under the Supporting Information section above) relating to the Waste Management theme has delivered c.£1m of savings relating to the cost of waste disposal. This has been achieved via initiatives focused on reduction and diversion of residual material and more effective recycling (notably segregated food waste).

Efficiencies are yet to materialise in relation to the Civic Centre carbon initiative works, as they are currently ongoing and expected to complete this financial year.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The climate action strategy is the basis for borough-wide improvements in several areas. Residents and communities will benefit from a clear picture of how the Council is responding to the climate emergency. All actions are intended to respond to the climate emergency which is recognised to have major impacts on residents. In addition, targeted carbon reduction action will result in long term savings through a reduction in energy demand or through income generation from renewable energy supplies.

Consultation carried out or required

The Review is intended to be subject to a full public consultation in accordance with the recommendations set out in this report. The consultation responses will inform the final iteration of the Review and the actions to be taken over the next three years.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting the focus on the priority actions of the Climate Action Plan over the next three-years.

Furthermore, it is noted that £21,660k has been invested to date through S106 funding, Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding, along with Council Resources. A further £9,213k of S106 Funding and Council Resources are yet to be accessed to deliver the projects that are deemed to result in meaningful outputs.

Legal

The Climate Change Act 2008 (“the Act”) placed statutory requirements on the UK government to assess and report on climate change risks. Section 1 of the Act sets a legally binding UK carbon target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2050 (“net zero”). Currently there are no statutory targets for local authorities, however, following the Council’s climate emergency declaration in 2021, and in demonstrating its commitment to help achieve the government’s net zero target by 2050, it adopted its Strategic Climate Action Plan (“SCAP”). In line with the

Council's commitment, and subject to a public consultation, a review of the actions set out in the SCAP must now be undertaken in 2024. When consulting with the public, the Council must ensure the process is fair and it is conducted in accordance with the established Gunning Principles which can be summarised as follows:

- consultation should occur when proposals are at a formative stage;
- consultations should give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration;
- consultations should allow adequate time for consideration and response; and
- the product of consultation should conscientiously be taken into account by the decision maker.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Climate declaration – January 2020](#)
[Previous Strategies / reviews](#)