

Chichester District Council

CABINET

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Climate Emergency Declaration

1. Contacts

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2. Executive Summary

Reducing carbon emissions is an urgent but complicated issue. This report recommends declaration by the Council of a Climate Emergency and tasks the Environment Panel with identifying and evaluating the options for resourcing and developing a detailed action plan to address climate change.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That Cabinet makes the following declaration of a climate emergency:
“Chichester District Council declares a Climate Emergency and requests the Environment Panel to advise Cabinet and Council on how to move to a carbon neutral environment.
- 3.2 That the Environment Panel draft Terms of Reference as outlined in Appendix 1 are approved and that the Panel is tasked with evaluating priority actions for a Climate Emergency Action plan, and reports back to Cabinet in November 2019.
- 3.3 That the Environment Panel is asked in its report to identify and evaluate the resources needed to achieve delivery of the action plan, including the proposal for a Climate Emergency Officer funded from reserves and the potential for the use of the Zero Carbon Graylingwell payment for implementing carbon reduction initiatives.
- 3.4 That in the event that the Council is invited to accept a transfer of funds by Homes England associated with the Zero Carbon Graylingwell project, authority is delegated to the Director of Planning and Environment to accept the funds which are to be used towards specified carbon reduction projects, the spend for which will need to be first agreed in each case by both Homes England and the Council.

4. Background

- 4.1 At Council in March 2019, the draft budget resolution was amended and approved to task Cabinet with the consideration of using up to £150,000 from reserves to fund a three year Climate Emergency officer.
- 4.2 Nationally the UK is now committed to achieving net carbon neutrality by 2050. The Climate Emergency campaign group is pressing for this to be achieved by 2030 in order to avoid dangerous levels of global heating. Over 80 councils have now made a declaration of a Climate Emergency.
- 4.3 The withdrawal of several central government initiatives has led to a reduction in local level action by local authorities, including the Council. These include: Feed in Tariffs for domestic renewables, the Zero Carbon Homes Standard for new build dwellings, and the Green Deal for improvements to existing housing.
- 4.4 However, carbon reduction is a focus in many work streams within the Council's services. Through the Local Plan Review, policies are proposed for setting standards for sustainable construction, energy efficiency and water usage in new development above national minimums, policies are included for sustainable drainage and flooding and wildlife corridors. The Council's Air Quality Action Plan reduces carbon footprint encouraging modal shift, development of new walking and cycling infrastructure and installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points in the district. The Council has also recently introduced a preferred policy for purchasing electric vehicles (EV) in the CDC fleet and a salary sacrifice scheme for staff to purchase low emission vehicles. The Council also provides help for those households in fuel poverty through the Council's Home Energy officers and the Chichester Warm Homes Initiative.
- 4.5 The UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC), an independent and statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008, has recommended more support nationally and locally for four "simple, low-cost options" in their 2018 report to parliament. These are:
- Increase onshore wind and solar PV
 - Increase energy efficiency in new and existing buildings
 - Increase Tree Planting
 - Recycle food waste by 2025
- 4.6 Homes England (HE) have offered the Council the opportunity to use funds due them from the Graylingwell development – to be spent on quantifiable carbon reduction projects District-wide. The amount of this Zero Carbon Graylingwell funding has not been fully confirmed but is likely to be between £500-700k, depending on the rate paid per tonne of carbon to be offset. The transfer of funds would be subject to a legal agreement and the local implementation of projects would have to be agreed by HE and Linden Homes. This offers a significant opportunity to re-invigorate action locally for a limited time period.

5. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 5.1 The main outcome to be achieved is to produce an action plan which will deliver quantifiable carbon reductions within the District and will demonstrate how local

action can contribute to achieving the climate emergency target and contribute to our national and international commitments.

- 5.2 Secondary outcomes are to reduce fuel bills for local residents and/or businesses and to support investment in the skills, training and jobs required to transition to a low carbon economy.

6. Proposal

- 6.1 That the Cabinet makes a climate emergency declaration and requests the Environment Panel to advise Cabinet and Council on how to move to a carbon neutral environment. The Council should focus on those actions that can be delivered locally and that will help achieve the local and national targets.
- 6.2 That the Cabinet approves the Environment Panel draft Terms of Reference detailed in Appendix 1, which include: advising on climate change strategy, identifying and evaluating the priority actions recommended by the Committee on Climate Change in their 2018 report on a net zero target; to identify resources needed to achieve delivery through a new Climate Emergency Action plan, including the proposal for a Climate Emergency Officer funded from reserves and the potential for use of a Zero Carbon Graylingwell payment to fund carbon reduction initiatives.
- 6.3 It is anticipated that the Environment Panel will provide a report back to Cabinet in November 2019.

7. Alternatives Considered

- 7.1 Alternatives considered include:
- Not making a declaration of a Climate Emergency - however, the importance of climate change requires action at national and local level and the Council is very supportive of this work
 - Making a recommendation directly to Cabinet without further opportunity for Member and officer evaluation of the potential routes forward. Whilst this could initially speed up the process it risks setting the Council on a course which might not deliver cost effective carbon reductions and might not follow national government recommendations, which it is anticipated, are imminent following the recent government announcement to adjust the carbon zero target..

8. Resource and Legal Implications

- 8.1 Finance: There are no budget implications for the Panel's review. Any subsequent proposals and associated financial implications will need to be brought back to Cabinet for a decision or Council if the proposals exceed £100,000.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 No specific consultation has been undertaken on the proposals in this report. The Environment Panel can consider making proposals for consultation as part of the detailed development of an action plan.

10. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 10.1 Community impacts from the new Climate Action Plan will reduce carbon emissions and will reduce fuel bills. The type and extent of impacts will depend on the focus of the action plan.
- 10.2 Potential carbon reduction measures are broad and there may be community aspirations to deliver measure in sustainable transport, air quality, biodiversity enhancement and water management, yet these may fall outside of the requirements of the funding source(s) and as such expectations may need to be managed.
- 10.3 There is a risk that the Zero Carbon Graylingwell funding will be delayed or is transferred to the Council with unduly restrictive conditions on its use. This risk can be mitigated by evaluating other funding sources. However, few if any funding sources are currently available to local authorities and significant action would be dependent on new funding being made available following the government's decision to increase the targets in the Climate Change Act.

11. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		x
Climate Change and Biodiversity Positive impact on climate change issues	x	
Human Rights and Equality Impact		x
Safeguarding and Early Help		x
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		x
Health and Wellbeing Providing a local contribution to avoiding dangerous global heating will contribute to protecting the health and wellbeing of the districts residents	x	

12. Appendix

- 12.1 Draft Environment Panel - Terms of Reference - Appendix 1

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 Committee on Climate Change Report on Net Zero target
<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/>