

# Chichester District Council

CABINET

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## Climate Emergency Initial Action Plan

### 1. Contacts

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### 2. Executive Summary

The Environment Panel were tasked by Cabinet with “evaluating priority actions for a Climate Emergency Action Plan” and 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”.

This report represents the culmination of the work undertaken by the Environment Panel and presents the Climate Emergency Initial Action Plan for approval by Cabinet. It also presents for approval the preferred option for the resourcing of the Action Plan as recommended by Environment Panel.

### 3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the Climate Emergency Initial Action Plan, as presented in Appendix 1, is approved.
- 3.2 That Cabinet recommend to Council that a Climate Emergency officer post at a total cost of £120,000, plus an operational budget of £30,000, is funded from reserves for 2 years (full time) to support delivery of the Action Plan.

### 4. Background

- 4.1 Cabinet declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 9 July 2019. As part of that report Cabinet tasked the Environment Panel with “evaluating priority actions for a Climate Emergency Action plan” and also asked the panel “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”.

4.2 Since the meeting of Cabinet in July, the Environment Panel has met a number of times to determine the scope of the actions to tackle climate change that are deliverable (by a local authority) and then developed a list of action areas in order of priority. At its meeting in November, the Panel commented on a draft Initial Action Plan. This was developed further and the plan finalised at the December Panel. It is this Plan which is presented for Cabinet's approval and is included in Appendix 1 to this report. Options for resources to support the action plan delivery were also assessed at the November meeting, with the preferred option forming the basis of the recommendation to Cabinet in paragraph 3.2 above.

## **5. Outcomes to be Achieved**

5.1 The main outcome to be achieved is the reduction in carbon emissions from Chichester District in response to the declaration of a Climate Emergency. A District wide area target of a 10% year-on-year reduction is proposed in action 3 of the Initial Action Plan (Appendix 1). National, local and individual actions beyond those in the CDC action plan would be needed to achieve this. The target is set to reflect a step up from the current level of reductions which are between 3 and 5% year on year. However, it is less than the 13% year-on-year to 2050 figure that the UK's 2050 net zero target would require, reflecting that the carbon reduction trajectory will not be linear over time.

5.2 The Environment Panel evaluated the potential of Low Carbon Chichester funding from the Graylingwell redevelopment via Homes England. The action plan seeks to utilise this funding (approx. £250,000) in combination with match funding to deliver practical carbon reduction projects across the District, rather than limiting funding to a specified geographical area. Securing this funding and putting in place the resources to support its utilisation, is a key outcome of the Plan. The recommendation for a new post is based, in large part, on being able to deliver the work on Low Carbon Chichester without affecting other work areas.

5.3 The action plan will also deliver reductions in carbon from new developments, from the Council's own operations and via an increase in tree planting.

## **6. Proposal**

6.1 The Initial Action Plan in Appendix 1 contains high level actions with outcomes and overall timescales. This will form the basis for a more detailed action plan, to be developed by the new post-holder (if funding is approved), which will break down each of the numbered actions into stages and determine project milestones and dates for performance management.

6.2 The scope of potential actions considered by the Environment Panel was initially very broad. In developing the plan, the Panel have considered the main areas that a district council can influence. The main focus of the plan is on carbon reduction, so as to demonstrate the district's contribution towards national targets in addressing the climate emergency. The plan does not evaluate climate adaptation measures specifically, although many services within the Council are already contributing to this agenda. The actions on tree planting and wetland creation will have additional benefits for adaptation, biodiversity and health and wellbeing in general.

- 6.3 The benefits of the plan are aimed at all residents of and visitors to the district. Further work in drawing up the criteria for the Local Carbon Chichester fund will affect where the benefits of that funding fall depending on whether domestic and/or non-domestic buildings are eligible.
- 6.4 The main timescales are set out in the Initial Action Plan. Project milestones will be developed as part of the detailed action plan. The new post will sit within the existing Environment Strategy team in the Environmental Management division.

## **7. Alternatives Considered**

- 7.1 The plan has been developed from a longer list of options, which were considered by the Environment Panel. Examples of other local authorities' action plans have been considered. For the resources required to support the plan, a range of options were also considered by the Panel. These included a full time post, a part time post and an option for a mixture of additional staff time from existing part-time posts and external consultancy support.
- 7.2 In order to make full use of the Low Carbon Chichester funds, and to implement a full range of actions, including carbon savings within our own estates, tree planting schemes, securing carbon reductions from new development and wider publicity and community-based campaigns, the Panel has recommended to Cabinet, an option for a full time post for 2 years. The options considered by the Panel are set out in Appendix 2.

## **8. Resource and Legal Implications**

- 8.1 Financial implications are that £150k will be expended from reserves on a fixed term post including a supporting operational budget. However, in making its recommendation, Environment Panel considered this to outweigh the wider cost of not investing in a detailed action plan now. There is no certainty at the moment that alternative sources of funding from central government will be forthcoming and delaying a full action plan until such funding may become available would not achieve the objectives of the climate emergency declaration.
- 8.2 The Climate Change Act 2008 is the primary piece of legislation driving action nationally. The UK government has recently changed its target to making the country net carbon neutral by 2050. Carbon budget setting is not yet devolved down to local authority areas. In order to meet community expectation of local action, it is recommended that we take action now, rather than wait for a future binding target to be imposed.
- 8.3 Staffing implications. The proposal is for a two year fixed-term post. The post will require a high level of technical knowledge on energy management, carbon reduction technologies, as well as the ability to deliver projects over a relatively short space of time. The proposed budget has been assessed using an estimated staff grade that reflects this skills set.
- 8.4 The recommended option also includes a supporting operational budget. This is proposed because the Low Carbon Chichester funds can only be used towards supporting that project's own carbon reduction targets. Other projects in the action

plan can be publicised using this allocation, which will also support training and equipment for the Project Officer.

8.5 Property implications. The wider property implications from recommended Action 12 in the Action Plan cannot be assessed yet and each will depend on its own business case being developed. However cost effective investment in reducing carbon emission will also reduce running costs.

## 9. Consultation

9.1 Environment Panel members have been consulted through the development of the priority areas for action, the initial action plan and on the options for resourcing.

## 10. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

10.1 The main community impacts will be to reduce carbon emissions, demonstrate leadership in addressing the Climate Emergency, and encouraging actions by communities and individuals. Secondary impacts will be increased tree planting and increased partnership working within the district.

10.2 Risks that could affect delivery include:

- Changes in government policy, particularly on planning policy.
- Changes to funding available for projects on our own estate and /or projects being identified, but only with a long payback period.
- Lack of identifiable sites with land owner agreements for tree planting projects.

10.3 The proposed Initial Action Plan is based on current policy and funding opportunities. Other funding opportunities may come forward nationally during the two years of the new officer post. The action plan will be subject to annual review by the Panel in order to ensure that it remains focussed on the opportunities available and is not adversely affected by changes in the national policy and funding contexts.

## 11. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		X
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity</b> Yes positive impacts for addressing climate change locally and for biodiversity	X	
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b> In developing the Low Carbon Chichester funding criteria an equalities impact assessment will be carried out.	X	
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b>		X
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b> By supporting sustainable lifestyles and transport choices, there should be minor but positive impacts on health and wellbeing	X	

## 12. Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 - Chichester District's Climate Emergency Initial Action Plan 2020 – 2025

12.2 Appendix 2 - Options for the Resourcing and Scope of Chichester District's Climate Emergency Action Plan

**13. Background Papers**

13.1 None