

# Chichester District Council

Cabinet

7 September 2021

## Climate Emergency Action Plan - Proposed Budget Amendments

### 1. Contacts

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#### **Cabinet Member:**

Penny Plant – Cabinet Member for the Environment and Contract Services  
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### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That, subject to completion of the WSCC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) prioritisation and pre-engagement stages, Cabinet approves the commissioning of a feasibility study for one priority LCWIP scheme funded by Business Rates Pool funding (£38,000) with the remainder allocated from reserves (£12,500).
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that the following proposals are to be considered within the context of the Future Services Framework priority setting exercise after which they will be reported back to cabinet as appropriate for further consideration:
  - (a) Feasibility studies for two further priority LCWIP schemes (paragraphs 4.2 - 4.5).
  - (b) Appointment of a Home Energy Conservation Officer (paragraphs 4.5 - 4.7).
- 2.3 That Cabinet approves the options for engagement and communication on climate change as outlined in paragraphs 4.8 - 4.11.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council's Detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan was approved by Full Council in January 2021. A number of initiatives within the action plan are currently being progressed.
- 3.2 At the Full Council meeting on 2 March 2021, Councillor Jonathan Brown proposed a number of budget amendments to enable further action under Climate Change. The proposed amendments were under the following headings:
  1. Property Decarbonisation Technical Manager Post;
  2. Zero Carbon Transport Design Officer;
  3. Chichester District Homes Decarbonisation & Skills Fund;
  4. Climate Change Communications and Coordination Budget.
- 3.3 At Council it was resolved that the proposed budget amendments would be referred to the Environment Panel for further consideration. At the March Environment Panel meeting, Officers' initial views on those options were presented. A more detailed report was presented to Environment Panel on 12 July. The Panel noted that the consideration of option 1: Property Decarbonisation Technical Manager Post would be delayed until after the feasibility study on the decarbonisation of CDC's estate had been undertaken, as this would identify the scope of decarbonisation work available and inform the business case for any additional staff resources that might be required. However, in respect of Option 2 - the Zero Carbon Transport Design Officer; Option 3 - Chichester District Homes Decarbonisation & Skills Fund; and Option 4, further officer evaluation was provided to enable consideration by Environment Panel and subsequently Cabinet as to options for the way forward.

### **4. Proposals**

- 4.1 Prior to their consideration at Environment Panel, the options were considered by SLT, officers within the Environmental Strategy Unit, Environmental Protection Team and the Housing Team.

#### **Option 2 - Zero Carbon Transport Design Officer:**

- 4.2 The issues, options and business case for additional resources to enable priority LCWIP scheme delivery are described in Appendix 1. The proposals focus on the working up of feasibility studies for priority LCWIP schemes at an estimated cost to the Council of £50,500 /scheme. Nevertheless, WSCC may be awarded Department for Transport (DfT) funds towards developing feasibility studies which may enable the CDC spend on relevant schemes to be lower than estimated.
- 4.3 Since Environment Panel in July 2021, as part of their prioritisation process, WSCC has asked that district and boroughs pre-engage with parish, district and county elected members, the MP and the local cycle forum. This is to establish whether the priority schemes have political support in relevant geographic

areas. Where there is a lack of majority support then schemes will not progress further as WSCC will not bid for Active Travel Fund (ATF) monies where deliverability is in doubt. Where priority schemes have majority support then a feasibility study will be procured for each scheme. Feasibility studies will then be the basis for full public engagement and preliminary costed design. Successful completion of these stages - with the public indicating majority support for each scheme – is anticipated to enable WSCC to bid for DfT Active Travel Funding for delivery of priority schemes. In this way the estimated spend by CDC of £50,500/scheme can attract between £0.5M and £1.5M of scheme delivery for CDC's current priority schemes, thus making the business case for investment.

4.4 The recommendation from Environment Panel to Cabinet was

*That the panel recommends to Cabinet that a feasibility study is commissioned for one priority LCWIP scheme funded by Business Rates Pool funding (£38,000); with the remained allocated from reserves (£8,000); two further LCWIP schemes to be considered within the context of the Future Services Framework priority setting exercise*

However, since the Environment Panel meeting, WSCC, as described in paragraph 4.3 above, asked all authorities to undertake a pre-engagement exercise with relevant elected persons and the local cycle forum. The report recommendation 2.1 reflects this additional request.

4.5 It is understood from WSCC that the first possibility of bringing a West Sussex scheme(s) forwards for delivery using ATF monies will be in 2022/23.

**Option 3 - Chichester District Homes Decarbonisation & Skills Fund:**

4.5 The existing work streams, issues and options in relation to the decarbonisation of homes within Chichester District are presented in Appendix 2.

4.6 Although many permutations of options are possible, consideration of service needs and priorities led to a preferred option as recommended by Environment Panel:

- Recruitment of a new Home Energy Conservation Officer post (full-time) on a 2 year fixed term contract as part of a pilot project. This would be a Grade D/E post (subject to evaluation) at a cost of £34,138-£41,950 (including NI and pension costs) along with an annual car allowance of £1,239 plus expenses.

4.7 The panel recommendation to Cabinet is as follows:

*The panel endorses the proposal to appoint a Home Energy Conservation Officer subject to its wider consideration within the context of the Future Services Framework priority setting exercise.*

The business case for a full time Home Energy Conservation Officer, fixed term for 2 years, is also provided in Appendix 2.

#### **Option 4 - Engagement and Communication Campaign on Climate Change**

- 4.8 The behavioural change campaign is currently under development as a multi local authority project, led by WSCC. It is envisaged that there will be a series of mini-campaigns on different themes that councils can choose to participate in or not, depending on their individual priorities. WSCC have a highly-interactive web platform that can be used.
- 4.9 Working groups will be developed that focus on particular themes e.g. large-scale renewable energy or a geographical area. The smaller groups would be more agile and the sharper focus would ensure that projects were progressed to fruition as opposed to a bigger group with a large agenda that could overwhelm participants and undermine and slow down discussions of what to do first.
- 4.10 The Climate Assembly developed from the proposal to investigate the feasibility of a Climate Commission within the initial Climate Emergency Action Plan. There was support from Environment Panel for a Citizen's Jury which, following the consultation on the Detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan, was expanded to be a larger Climate Assembly. The Assembly gives a more formal voice to individuals within the district. The audience for this voice are the councillors and senior leadership within the council and other organisations whose decisions shape the district. The assembly was expected to cost around £55,000, although similar events at other authorities have cost considerably more. Delays to the assembly and concerns about cost to benefit ratios lead to consideration of alternatives.
- 4.11 Internal discussion of service needs and priorities between the Cabinet and Officers, including SLT, has led to a preferred alternative package of measures as set out below to achieve the same end of gathering feedback from members of the public:
  - a) *Let's Talk Panel.*

This currently comprises of 773 people and is not intended to be representative of the district's population. Limited demographic information is gathered. To make it representative, more information could be collected from participants and gaps in representation filled through promotion with groups e.g. the university, college and business associations.

- b) *Use existing communication routes to invite feedback on the climate emergency plan.*

The communications team has a monthly newsletter about the Local Plan going to 2,600 people. People who are interested in the Local Plan can be re-directed

to climate change information and feedback invited. The same process can be applied to the corporate email newsletter: recipients can be directed to our climate change plans and asked to comment. The council already receives comment on climate change activities via its social media channels.

- c) *Formalise the holding of twice-yearly public meetings which are already held on an ad-hoc basis.*

Environmental Strategy Unit officers already give presentations to interested groups on the CDC's climate change work. This could be formalised to a twice-yearly event either via the internet or using the council's committee rooms.

- 4.12 Consideration of the package of engagement measures led to the recommendation from Environment Panel to Cabinet as follows:

*That the panel recommends to Cabinet that the options for engagement and communication on climate change as outlined in paragraphs 4.8 – 4.11 are approved.*

## 5. Resource and Legal Implications

- 5.1 The cost of employing a temporary officer to back-fill officer time for the delivery of three LCWIP feasibility studies is £10,500 per scheme (together with £2,000 for the first feasibility study to supplement the Business Rates Pool funding) which would need to be met from the Council's reserves (detailed in Appendix 1).
- 5.2 The annual cost to the authority of the Home Energy Efficiency Officer is estimated to be £36k - £43k, so the cost for the two-year post is estimated to be £72k - £86k. These costs would need to be met from the Council's reserves (detailed in Appendix 2).
- 5.3 The costs of the Climate Change Behavioural Change Campaign, working groups and methods to gather feedback will be met from the existing operational budget.
- 5.4 Given the budgetary implications of option 3 and the two further LCWIP schemes under option 2 as set out in this report, it is necessary for them to be considered within the context of the Future Services Framework priority setting work being undertaken over the summer. This will enable members to determine priorities and allocate our resources accordingly. In addition, there may be further budgetary implications under Option 1 once the outcome of the decarbonisation feasibility study is known.

## 6. Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following?	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		X

Are there any implications for the following?		
	Yes	No
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity</b> Positive impacts for tackling Climate Change	X	
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b>		X
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		X
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b>		X
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b> Fuel poverty is addressed	X	

## 7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 - Business case for a Zero-Carbon Transport Design Officer.
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Business Case for a Full-Time Home Energy Conservation Officer, fixed term for 2 years.