

Report to Stronger Place Select Committee

Date of meeting: 9 December 2019

Portfolio: Planning Services (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Climate Emergency

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Committee note the proposed recruitment to a new Climate Change Officer post (initially for 2 years), to drive forward the climate emergency agenda;**
- (2) To note that an action plan will be developed to cut across all relevant service areas to deliver the Council's resolution to declare a climate emergency and its pledge to do everything within its power to make the Epping Forest District carbon neutral by 2030.**

Report:

1. At its meeting on 19 September 2019, the Council resolved to declare a Climate Emergency and pledged to do everything within its power to make the Epping Forest District carbon neutral by 2030. The Council also agreed to implement an Air Quality Strategy and bring forward sustainability guidance to support the local plan policies.
2. It is recognised that additional resources are required to deliver the ambitious aims of the Climate Emergency agenda. Budget provision has been identified for 2020/21 to recruit to a newly created full time Climate Change Officer post (initially for 2 years) which will be brought forward in this financial year so that the post can be advertised immediately.
3. A working group, reporting to the relevant portfolio holder, will be established and a Climate Change Action Plan produced that will commit and drive forward the Council's overall Climate Emergency objective of making the district carbon neutral by 2030 in its capacity as a community leader; by our example as a service provider; and through the management of our own buildings and operations.
4. At its meeting on 19 September 2019 Members moved that the Council engage with young people when considering the issue of climate change and appoint a Youth Ambassador from the Epping Forest Youth Council. This working group will be the conduit for active engagement with the Youth Council, through its Ambassador, in developing the Action Plan and encouraging behavioural change across the District.
5. A Draft Plan will be subject to Cabinet approval for wider engagement with key stakeholders including the Youth Council and will focus on the following areas: ensuring development proposals on site allocations in the local plan achieve high standards of sustainability; carbon reduction of council owned properties, ensuring operations and services within the Council's control consider measures to become carbon neutral; supporting behavioural change through positive engagement and enforcement; reducing

emissions from transport by promoting sustainable transport including walking, cycling and promoting bus services and implementation of an air quality strategy.

Reason for decision:

The Council resolved to declare a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 19 September 2019 and pledged to do everything in its power to ensure the district is carbon neutral by 2030. Additional resource is necessary to drive forward this overarching objective and budget is allocated for this.

Options considered and rejected:

Not to provide additional resource will compromise the Councils ability to deliver its Climate Emergency objectives within committed timescales.

Consultation undertaken: None

Resource implications:

A DDF bid of £112,000 over 2 years has been submitted to cover the cost of a newly created Climate Change Officer post and associated expenditure.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There is no legal obligation on local authorities to meet the 2030 targets for carbon reduction although there is an expectation that they act responsibly and meet the Government's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050. This Council has declared a climate emergency that goes beyond this.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

The Local Plan Submission Version 2017 contains a policy designed to promote the notion of making good places to live, work and visit. This will include safer by design principles, sustainable development, the provision of alternatives to the car, energy efficiency and environmental considerations as well as sustainable drainage systems and quality green infrastructure. The Climate Change Officer Post and Action Plan will ensure that the sustainability principles are embedded within the Councils policies and practices across all services to reduce the carbon footprint and consider environmental sustainability in everything we do.

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

Council Minutes:19 September 2019 - Item 39: Resolution adopted to declare a Climate Emergency

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The Council resolved to declare a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 19 September 2019 and pledged to do everything within its power to make Epping Forest District Council area carbon neutral by 2030. To not be seen to honour its pledge and take positive action towards meeting its objective would expose the Council to significant reputational criticism from residents, campaigners and central government

Equality:

The recruitment to a Climate Emergency post to assist in driving forward the Councils ambition to tackle the climate emergency will have a positive impact on the environment for all people living, working and visiting the Epping Forest district. There are no actual or likely adverse impacts that may be attributed to people with protected characteristics as determined by the Equalities Act 2010.