

# Stratford-on-Avon District Council

## Climate Change update – September 2019

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the meeting of Council, held on 15 July 2019, following the consideration of a petition from more than 1,000 residents, Council considered a Notice on Motion in relation to declaring a Climate Change emergency. After an extremely positive debate the following position statement was overwhelmingly supported by Council:

*The Council declares a 'Climate Emergency' as a pledge to take local action to contribute to national carbon neutral targets through the development of their own practices and policies, **with an aim to be carbon-neutral in Stratford District by 2030.***

- 1.2 In addition to this overriding policy objective, it was agreed that the Cabinet request the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:

*... convene a task and finish working group to consult with and invite input from representatives of local environmental groups, residents and businesses, and report back to The Cabinet and Council by January 2020 on the following areas:*

- (i) the effectiveness of the current activities undertaken by the Council to combat climate change;*
- (ii) how all council policy proposals could best consider the impacts of climate change and the mitigation and adaptation measures required;*
- (iii) a critical analysis of what additional actions the Council could take to contribute to national carbon neutral targets, and;*
- (iv) what adaptation measures the Council may need to put in place as climate change worsens;*
- (v) how the Council could best engage residents on the severity of the Climate Emergency, and the ways the Council could help facilitate local people and businesses to take independent action;*
- (vi) how the Council could work with local and regional organisations and environmental groups to raise awareness and combat climate change;*
- (vii) the changes in national regulations and policies that may be needed, so that Council could, where required, call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources needed.*

- 1.3 To ensure that progress is made at pace a Leader's decision was published following the meeting of Council to enable the work of the OSC to commence more quickly.

- 1.4 The Council is taking this declaration extremely seriously and it has motivated both the Members and Officers of the Council to take action. Following the decisions of Council and the Leader, this paper identifies what the Council has undertaken since 15 July 2019 and what its immediate plans will be.

### 2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 Following the Leader's decision on 15 August the Committee swiftly established a Task and Finish Group to start their work. This group is being supported by the

Council's Head of Planning and Housing, as well as dedicated support from Democratic Services.

- 2.2 The Terms of Reference for this group were established at their meeting on 22 August 2019, and they have an ambitious programme of work to complete by January 2020. They have agreed five discrete work streams which will report back to The Cabinet with recommendations on future initiatives. The individual work streams are:

**Workstream 1 – Operational Programme**

This would focus on the areas the Council can most easily influence i.e. its own estate and operational programme. This would pick-up points (i), (ii), and (iii) of the motion, and follow-on from previous work undertaken by the Council.

**Workstream 2 – Community Leader and Partnerships**

This stream would focus on what the Council can do through facilitation and community leadership. This would pick-up part (v) and (vi) of the motion.

**Workstream 3 – Central Government**

SDC's role as a lobbyist picking-up part (vii) of the motion

**Workstream 4 - Adaptation**

This would focus on adaptation measures and pick-up part (iv) of the motion.

**Other: A Carbon Neutral District by 2030:**

This is more ambitious than the current national target or the recommendation from the Committee on Climate Change: net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050.

- 2.3 A copy of their scoping document is attached. Interim recommendations will be reported back to The Cabinet between now and January 2020 to enable policy decisions to be made early and resources to be made available through the budget process.

**3 Council Plan 2019-2023**

- 3.1 The Council Plan is the overriding policy document for the Council that lays out the ambitions and priorities for the next four years. The Cabinet has been working on developing this strategy over the last three months and has engaged with partners, all councillors and staff.

- 3.2 In considering this plan the overriding vision for the Council is that by 2030 we want Stratford on Avon District to...:

*..be one of the UK's first carbon-neutral districts supporting zero-carbon innovation, technology and construction and be at the forefront of climate change adaption.*

- 3.3 During August, the Council undertook extensive consultation which generated almost 700 responses from the public, businesses, other public sector partners and the voluntary sector. Ahead of the findings, from the Task and Finish Group, taking on board this feedback and the need to establish a policy position, the Council is currently proposing the following specific ambitions and actions. These will be reviewed by The Cabinet at their meeting on 7 October 2019 and are expected to be considered by Council on 23 October 2019.

## Responding to the climate emergency

We will do all we can locally to contribute to national carbon reduction targets, fulfil our aim to becoming a carbon-neutral district by 2030 and support measures to adapt to the impact of climate change

Ambitions	Actions
<p>Reduce our carbon footprint and emissions as a district and as a Council.</p> <p>Establish action to tackle climate change as a key driver of all decision-making.</p> <p>Take action to mitigate the impact of climate change.</p> <p>Work with Warwickshire County Council to deliver a more sustainable transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Secure environmentally sustainable development.</p>	<p>Consider the recommendations of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group to set the direction for the council’s response to the climate emergency.</p> <p>Create and embed an ongoing review of all activities and their impact on climate change and deliver a suite of strategies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a carbon-reduction and adaptation plan</li> <li>• an environmentally focused waste strategy, including more recycling options and development of a leading-edge recycling facility;</li> <li>• an investment strategy that underpins environmental sustainability</li> </ul> <p>Lead by example as a council in climate change policy and adaptation, eg, limiting the usage of single-use plastics</p> <p>Increase the number of electric vehicle charging points across the district</p> <p>Work towards developing a district-wide cycling infrastructure</p>

### 4. Budget

- 4.1 The Council is an organisation under severe financial stress; although a four year spending settlement had been expected from central government, due to the lack of parliamentary time to dedicate to this, the Council is now likely to receive a one year settlement.
- 4.2 Over the last five years the Council has lost its entire revenue support grant of £3.9m, and other streams of financing including business rates and new homes bonus are under threat.
- 4.3 The Council’s budget proposals for 2020/21 will be published for consultation in January 2020. The declaration of a Climate Change emergency has resonated across the whole organisation and motivated both the members and officers of the Council. Despite the significant financial pressures that the Council faces, there will be resources provided in the next budget to help the Council and our communities achieve our ambitious targets and actions.

## **5. Recent activity on Carbon reduction**

- 5.1** The Council has a long history of monitoring and acting to reduce its carbon footprint. This role was for many years undertaken by a specific environment panel which received regular reports on the Council's energy usage and it went on to develop a carbon reduction plan in 2012/13 which had a target of 10% reduction from within 5 years, ie by 2017/18.
- 5.2 The 2012/13 baseline was 3,965 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e (kilograms of Co<sub>2</sub> equivalent) and the two key components of this was the councils refuse and recycling contract service which accounted for 43% and secondly the Council's leisure centres which accounted for 42% of the total energy consumed by all Council activities. Not surprisingly the Council's carbon reduction plan majored on these two areas, because of the greater potential to make a positive impact.
- 5.3 As a result of a number of interventions made in these areas as well as others, the Council was successful in achieving a 9% reduction within the 5 years. Whilst this was short of the target, work has continued since that time and the 10% reduction has since been achieved.
- 5.4 The newly established Task and Finish Group referred to above at section 2 will be reviewing this data as part of their work and making new challenging recommendations for further reductions to reflect the decision made by Full Council in July this year.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 Over the last two months the Council has already organised itself to carefully consider the issue of Climate Change and how we as an organisation can best respond.
- 6.2 This document identifies some of this activity; however, we will also be working very closely with partners across the district and region to ensure that we learn from best practice across the piece.
- 6.3 The Council will provide regular updates on this activity and will also let you know how you can get involved in this initiative.