

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STREET SCENE and ENVIRONMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

08 June 2021

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

To report on progress against the Year 1 Climate Change Action Plan and to seek endorsement for the Year 2 Action Plan.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 A Climate Change Strategy and Year 1 Action Plan was approved by this Committee in 2020. It was agreed that progress would be reported and published on an annual basis. It was also agreed that this Committee would oversee and agree targets to be set for the following year.
- 1.1.2 The pandemic has impacted all areas of Council activity. In addition to increased workloads, resources have been diverted to deal with the ongoing situation and the lockdown restrictions and closures have meant that some of the targets could not be progressed as planned. Those that have had to be postponed due to the lockdown, will be carried forward into the Action Plan for 2021/22.
- 1.1.3 It should also be noted that there have been a number of carbon reduction benefits and opportunities due to the pandemic. Some initiatives have been accelerated, with a potential “new normal” that will deliver greater opportunities to lower carbon and reduce negative environmental impacts.

1.2 Progress 2020/21

- 1.2.1 Attached at Annex 1 to this report is the Year One Progress Update. Good progress has been made in all themes, with most targets either complete or in progress. Where targets have been postponed, an explanation has been provided in the progress section and a revised timescale has been included where possible.
- 1.2.2 A key area of work identified in the Climate Change Strategy was to evidence, prioritise and agree measures to be taken to lower carbon emissions at the Council. In line with GHG Protocol guidance, to determine which entities and operations will be in scope and secondly determine which emissions sources will

be in scope. The scoping work is now complete, and Members will remember that Laser (energy consultants) presented their findings at the last meeting of this Board. We are now at the stage where future targets and options can be discussed. This work will be fundamental in helping the Council work towards zero carbon status.

- 1.2.3 To promote a shift towards ULEV, the Council aims to increase the number of electric vehicle charge points across the borough. Research has been undertaken regarding the best way to achieve this which has been reported to CHAB, with a suggested phased approach to delivery. Work can now progress to help deliver a cohesive network of chargers.
- 1.2.4 Biodiversity and the need to strengthen local protection and enhance species, habitats and ecosystems is an important part of the Strategy and Action Plan. Actions for year one have been completed, except drafting the “Tree Charter”. This has been postponed due to the Government launch of the “England Trees Action Plan” on 18 May 2021. Contextual information from this plan can inform the Tree Charter and a draft will be brought to a future meeting of this board.
- 1.2.5 There has been very good progress in relation to housing and energy conservation, particularly surrounding the success of the “Solar Together” collective solar group purchasing scheme. 97 households have accepted the schemes proposed offer and PV panel installations are now taking place.
- 1.2.6 Promoting sustainable business has also been very effective with £84k pledged to 31 different projects, which included energy efficiency measures. A new LOCASE grant scheme has also been launched to further promote and encourage schemes that tackle and adapt to climate change. The Council will also launch the Green Business Grant Scheme which will further support carbon reduction measures and improve energy efficiency amongst local businesses.
- 1.2.7 Work has progressed well to lower carbon emissions from the Council’s own estate. The Council will soon be changing energy supplier to ensure that energy provided to the Council is supplied by renewable sources. Solar powered pay and display machines have also been installed in high profile on-street sites, and the migration to “Cloud” for IT services has enabled significant carbon reductions. Calculations provided by Microsoft (attached at Annex 2) confirm that the Council will see a reduction of 73% (34472kg of CO₂/annum) compared to the current on-premise hosting at Gibson Building. The migration project is underway with the aim to migrate most of our systems to Microsoft Azure cloud hosting by June 2021.
- 1.2.8 As mentioned earlier in the report, there are some themes that inevitably have had to be postponed. It was appropriate to leave the development of a dedicated climate change web page until the launch of the new TMBC website. Equally, some of the transport and travel choices campaigns would not have worked well against the backdrop of a national lockdown. Plans for an anti-idling campaign for schools, has also been put on hold as they have been partially shut or focusing on their covid measures and class bubbles.

1.3 Targets for 2021/22

- 1.3.1 Attached at Annex 3 to this report is the proposed Action Plan for 2021/22. Again, key focus will be on the carbon reduction measures identified by Laser. Careful consideration will need to be given to the options that have been suggested and we will need to allow time to build this work into the medium-term financial strategy. It is suggested that Members have time to review the options and the Council can agree and publish future targets towards the end of the financial year.
- 1.3.2 Timescales for the phased EV charging point initiative have been highlighted, with further details on this towards the end of the financial year when the outcomes of the procurement exercise have been progressed.
- 1.3.3 Measures that were postponed in 2020 have been carried forward, such as the consultation due to take place with taxi stakeholders regarding a vehicle replacement schedule, to meet higher Euro emission standards, working towards vehicles becoming zero emission capable (ZEC) or ULEV over the next 10 years. Responses from the consultation will be brought to the relevant board Autumn 2021.
- 1.3.4 To support biodiversity and carbon reduction measures, trial planting plots were established in 2020/21. We will report back on the progress of the Tiny Forest site at Leybourne along with the trial Roadside Nature Reserve in Tonbridge, to establish if further sites should be sought.
- 1.3.5 Following the successful funding bid from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, work will begin to retrofit energy efficiency measures in up to 80 homes in Tonbridge. In addition, £330,000 Green Homes Grant will be used to help improve energy efficiency measures in 60 homes over the coming year.

Work is already underway with actions in the 2021/22 Action Plan, and progress will once again be reported back to this Board along with targets for the next year. We will of course continue to seek funding to provide any additional activity which will help to promote the Council's climate change agenda.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 An earmarked reserve has been established in the sum of £250,000 to fund in full or part recommendations/ initiatives that come out of the scoping exercise in relation to the carbon descent plan for the Council.
- 1.5.2 £6,000 has been spent on consultancy expertise from Laser of which 50% has been met by KCC and the balance funded from the climate change reserve.

- 1.5.3 A further £55,000 may also be required from this reserve to fund green initiatives currently being investigated for the new Leybourne Lakes Country Park facility. Further details on this will be brought to the relevant board.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 N/A

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Asset Management
- 1.8.2 Biodiversity & Sustainability
- 1.8.3 Business Continuity/Resilience
- 1.8.4 Climate Change
- 1.8.5 Communications
- 1.8.6 Healthy Lifestyles
- 1.8.7 Community

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That the progress of the Climate Change Action Plan 2020-21 as set out in Annex 1 of this report **BE ENDORSED**
- 1.9.2 That the Climate Change Action Plan 2021-22 as set out in Annex 3 of this report **BE ADOPTED**

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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Chief Executive