

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

26 SEPTEMBER 2019

PROPOSED PLAN OF ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To propose a plan of action and indicative timetable in response to the Climate Emergency declared by Newark & Sherwood District Council.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Newark & Sherwood District Council declared a Climate Emergency at the Full Council meeting on July 16, 2019.

2.2 The agreed motion was:

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have warned that we have 12 years to make the necessary changes to limit a rise in global temperatures to 1.5°C. Failure to act will see a marked increase in sea levels and flooding, extreme and abrupt changes to weather patterns, crop failures, extinctions of plant, insect and animal species and global economic disruption and crisis.[1] The increased frequency and intensity of weather events that we have experienced locally highlight why this is such an important issue for Newark and Sherwood District Council to respond to.

At the Global Climate Talks in Poland last December the UK along with over 200 nations agreed action on climate change with a much greater role strongly implied for Local and Regional Authorities like Newark & Sherwood District Council in assisting Governments to achieve their carbon emission savings.

Newark & Sherwood District Council therefore:

- Declares a Climate Emergency;
- Notes that we will need to develop measures to try and offset climate change and global warming; and
- Will take the following measures;
 - (a) make the Leisure & Environment Committee responsible for looking into what the District Council does in trying to mitigate carbon emissions, improve recycling and to work with the partners to improve carbon efficiencies;
 - (b) to work with other local authorities and public, private and voluntary sector partners on carbon reduction projects;
 - (c) to lobby the Government for the necessary resources and powers so that Newark & Sherwood District Council can make its contribution to the UK's Carbon Reduction targets; and

[1] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Special Report – Global Warming of 1.5°C, October 2018

(d) the Leisure & Environment Committee provide and publish an annual review of measures taken by Newark & Sherwood District Council and their impact on the District's carbon footprint.

2.3 The declared Climate Emergency infers specific links with:

- the United Nations [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (and, by association, the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goal #13](#) to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”)
- UK Government commitments to carbon emission savings. The UK Government passed [laws](#) on 27 June 2019 to end the UK's contribution to global warming with the target of bringing all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 In response to the declaration, Newark and Sherwood District Council has established a cross-Council project team to examine how the Council should most appropriately respond to the declaration. This reflects the fact that the Council does not currently have a single point of responsibility for climate change in the way that some authorities currently do have.

3.2 Attached at **Appendix A** is a summary of the activities currently undertaken by the Council which could be described as having a positive impact in terms of reducing the Council's carbon footprint. For example, the move from the Grade I listed Kelham Hall to the modern, purpose built Castle House building in Newark, which is A rated in terms of efficiency and, closer to a main centre where a significant proportion of officers live, has enabled more sustainable methods of transport to work, including walking and cycling.

3.3 However, clause d) of the motion agreed by Full Council requires that the Council is able to understand how the measures in **Appendix A** and further interventions from the Council will impact upon the wider District's carbon footprint. Government data is available at the district level in terms of carbon emissions, but it is not able to describe the District Council's contribution to that footprint. In order to achieve the requirement within clause d), therefore, there is a need for the Council to first understand its carbon footprint.

3.4 Establishing a baseline will enable the Council to understand its current performance and be able to consider the interventions and resources required in order to reduce its footprint further. Furthermore, as well as considering its own response, the Council is able to influence carbon reduction through its regulatory role, in procurement and in commissioning services. There are further opportunities to influence this agenda across Nottinghamshire recognising that key impacts upon the carbon footprint of the district will be in the gift of others, including the County Council, for example, with its responsibility for air quality, highways and sustainable transport.

3.5 The project group is therefore recommending the following actions are undertaken in order to deliver the requirements set out in the Climate Emergency:

- audit existing environmental practice within the Council

- establish data to determine the carbon footprint of Newark and Sherwood District Council (currently limited)
- consider the Council's contribution to the district carbon footprint more widely, according to [national data](#) from reputable sources
- engage with stakeholders
- coordinate a Climate Emergency Strategy with reference to all of the above
- produce an accompanying generational Carbon Reduction Action Plan to mitigate carbon emissions from the Council.

3.6 In addition, the project group would recommend that a wider Climate Emergency Working Group of members is established to guide this work. In addition to ensuring that the requirements within the Climate Emergency motion are delivered, the purpose of the group would have a further two objectives.

3.7 Whilst Leisure & Environment Committee has recycling within its remit, issues such as planning and green spaces sit within Economic Development, whilst responsibility for the Council's housing stock sits within Homes & Communities. Finally, the Committee responsible for assessing and approving any interventions with finance implications sits within Policy & Finance. It would therefore seem logical to establish a working group under the direction of Policy & Finance Committee to ensure a Council-wide response from its Committees.

3.7 Furthermore, it is important to recognise that there are a wide range of groups which may be able to offer valuable insights into how the Council responds to this agenda and be able to influence the behaviour of others. A key role of this group will therefore be to engage with those groups to influence the development of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

3.8 Subject to approval by Leisure & Environment Committee and Policy & Finance Committee on September 26, indicative milestones would include:

- October: Commission consultancy to establish the Council's carbon footprint and assist the Council in the production of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- October/November: Meetings of the Climate Change Working Group, to establish calls for evidence which may include written submissions and meetings of key stakeholders with the Working Group
- February 2020: Production of a draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- March 2020: Consideration of the Climate Change Strategy, Action Plan and Resourcing to Policy and Finance Committee
- March 2021: First annual update in terms of interventions and impact in line with Clause d) of the agreed motion.

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 There are no equalities for the course of action outlined above. However, on receipt of a climate emergency strategy and carbon reduction action plan an equalities impact assessment may be required if proposed actions to mitigate carbon emissions might impact equality areas such as socio-economic.

5.0 Financial Implications (FIN19-20/3520)

- 5.1 A report titled Reallocation of Resources is on the agenda for the Policy & Finance Committee - 26 September 2019 which, amongst other items, seeks to create a budget which will assist the Council with the establishment of its baseline carbon footprint and assist with the production of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- 5.2 The financial implications arising from the production of the strategy and action plan will be considered by the Policy and Finance Committee in March 2020.

6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

- 6.1 Although the declaration of a Climate Emergency was made after Newark & Sherwood District Council's publication of the Community Plan 2019-2023, the Climate Emergency project might incorporate a number of actions from the Community Plan. Further consideration of these actions may also offer a means for addressing carbon reduction and green initiatives within the context of the Climate Emergency project, thus in turn possibly contributing to all eleven of the Community Plan objectives but specifically:

- improve the cleanliness and appearance of the local environment
- improve transport infrastructure to reduce congestion and facilitate growth
- accelerate the supply of new homes including associated facilities (playing pitches, health, schools, community centres etc.)
- protect, promote and enhance the district's natural environment
- enhance and sustain town centres
- improve the health and wellbeing of local residents
- increase participation with the Council and within local communities

7.0 Leisure & Environment Committee

- 7.1 The Leisure & Environment Committee are to consider this report at their meeting to be held on 24 September 2019. Their recommendations will be reported orally to the Policy & Finance Committee.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

Subject to the recommendations of the Leisure & Environment Committee:

- (a) the course of action and indicative timetable be approved;**
- (b) a Climate Change Working Group be established under the direction of this Committee, to comprise the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokespersons on the Policy & Finance, Leisure & Environment, Economic Development and Homes & Communities Committees; and**
- (c) the budget within the Reallocation of Resources report in relation to the production of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan be approved.**

Reason for Recommendations

To respond to the Climate Emergency declared by Newark & Sherwood District Council.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - An initial collation of environmental practice at NSDC.xlsx

For further information please contact Kate Marshall, Policy & Projects Officer on Ext. 5302

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