

Environment and Sustainability Committee



30 June 2021 Date of meeting

Title	Spelthorne responses to the Climate Emergency and consideration of projects for the Green Initiatives Fund
Purpose of the report	To note
Report Author	Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	Clean and Safe Environment
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: 1.To note the report 2.Agree the draft Environment and Sustainability Action Plan, which sits within the wider draft Corporate Recovery Plan due to be considered by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 5 July 2021 (Appendix 2)
Reason for Recommendation	<i>The purpose of the report is to provide members with an indication of projects undertaken to date and importantly potential projects going forward to reduce our carbon footprint and therefore allocation of the Green Initiatives Fund to help support proposed projects.</i>

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The Council declared a climate emergency in October 2020. Since October 2019 there has been a working group on Climate Change seeking to put in place measures to reduce carbon in both Council operations and the wider community. The issues of climate change and its impact on the world have come increasingly to the fore and as climate change is already impacting on our weather the urgency on undertaking further mitigating (and adaptive) actions is also increasing.
- 1.2 The Council has been addressing climate change over several years and has undertaken projects to reduce the carbon output of the Council (see Appendix 1).

- 1.3 To progress at a faster pace and ensure the focus is on genuinely reducing our carbon footprint the Council undertook, in early 2021, a study to form a baseline of its carbon footprint and a trajectory study which has enabled us to identify key areas to target to maximise carbon reduction in Council operations going forward.
- 1.4 As a result of the carbon trajectory study a series of key actions/tasks to maximise carbon reduction in Council operations were suggested (see below) over different time horizons. The Committee may wish to consider these as a way forward to achieve net zero emissions in due course: -

Short term next 6 months: -

- Collect and save emissions data as it is made available for all core Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions to fully identify our actual carbon footprint. (**Scope 1** covers direct **emissions** from owned or controlled sources. **Scope 2** covers indirect **emissions** from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling consumed by the reporting company. **Scope 3** includes all other indirect **emissions** that occur in a company's value chain)
- Set up further processes and procedures to request and record emissions data from suppliers and staff.
- Carry out detailed energy audits of all buildings.
- Create a full inventory of all council owned vehicles.
- Define our target to reduce to zero as soon as practicably possible.

Medium Term Action – Up to 18 Months

- Develop detailed feasibility studies to identify viable energy efficiency projects, localised power generation projects and carbon offsetting schemes.
- Carry out detailed engineering design for suggested projects emerging from feasibility studies.
- Develop a procurement strategy to deliver projects in a timely manner.
- Understand which funding options are available (both from Green Initiatives Fund and any available grants) and develop a strategy on how to fund specific projects.
- Liaise with the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to understand the grid capacity and how this relates to future electricity demands.
- Calculate the carbon footprint of the whole Local Authority area and provide an action plan for the whole Borough to be net zero carbon as soon as practically feasible and by 2050 at the latest.

Long Term Action – Within 10 Years

- Make a transition away from fossil fuel vehicles in the Council's fleet.
- Increase electric vehicle charging network and sustainable travel infrastructure.
- Develop large scale renewable heat and power generation projects for Council and housing projects.
- Roll out energy efficiency and power generation projects to all municipal and residential buildings.
- Develop an on-going tree planting and biodiversity improvement schemes

- 1.5 In implementing the proposed trajectory even if many of the initiatives save both carbon and costs in due course funding, both capital and revenue, is needed to put them in place. It should be noted that plans beyond 2021/22 will be part of budget setting process for 2022/23 and subject to submitting a growth/savings bid, if the current level of funding is fully utilised.
- 1.6 On 22 April 2021 the Council noted that the Forecast Outturn for 2021/22 showed that £497k could be released from the Project Delivery Fund for other projects. The Council agreed to allocate these funds (to the value of £497k) to the £250k identified in the Budget for 2021/22 as seed funding for Green Initiatives (including projects to tackle the climate emergency) bringing the total to £747,000 for both capital and revenue grants.
- 1.7 The Committee could therefore consider using this fund to follow the proposed carbon trajectory to reduce the Council's carbon footprint through various actions as outlined in Appendix 2 and in more detail on some areas in Appendix 3.
- 1.8 However, the Council also needs to work with businesses and communities to promote and support cleaner and greener living and working, thus aiming for a more sustainable economy post COVID-19 and Brexit.
- 1.9 In facilitating the community and business to reduce direct and indirect CO2 emissions, enhance biodiversity and to become resilient to changes caused by the changing climate the Council could encourage actions, many of which involve "nudge" and "behavioural change" aspects such as: -
 - a) the increased use of sustainable transport
 - b) reductions in energy use in homes, shops, businesses and elsewhere and a public education campaign to facilitate this
 - c) co-operation with organisations seeking to build sustainable developments that minimise carbon emissions
 - d) development and use of renewable energy sources
 - e) production, sale, and consumption of locally sourced and sustainably produced food
 - f) adoption of wildlife friendly land and water management practices.
- 1.10 The current review of the Local Plan (due for adoption in July 2023 if the Committee agree the revised LDS timetable elsewhere on this agenda) and associated policies can also support these aims through the development of supporting planning documents.
- 1.11 A key part of the work will be ensuring we clearly monitor our actions to reduce carbon so that we can collect the necessary data to prove we are moving to net zero by 2050. Therefore, any supported schemes should be able to clearly demonstrate their carbon benefits, which could be achieved through a primary criterion for assessing applications of CO2 savings per pound spent.
- 1.12 Proposed actions outlined in Appendix 2 (and some specific projects in Appendix 3) could, subject to the committee's input, be drawn together into a strategy and more detailed action plan for the Council in reducing its own, and the communities, carbon footprint and moving us to carbon neutrality (net zero).

2. Options

- 2.1 The climate change emergency has been declared by this Council and not to progress projects to further carbon reduction would not be in line with Council policies, for example the capital strategy policy 2021-26 and Asset Management Plan, or dealing with the real-world effects of climate change. Climate change is a significant risk to Surrey and Spelthorne due to rising temperatures and more sporadic but significant weather events such as flooding

Therefore, as the Council has declared a Climate Emergency and to achieve carbon neutrality it is important to progress projects which have real impact in reducing carbon both within the Council's operations and in the wider community. Therefore, considering the suggested programme and timelines plus associated projects to spend the Green initiatives fund on is vital in moving to a net zero position.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The Council has in place a Green Initiatives Fund to support projects tackling climate change. The fund's total is £747,000 for both capital and revenue spend. To achieve the greatest carbon reduction care needs to be made in allocating the spend hence the suggestion for assessing schemes, wherever possible, in terms of both feasibility studies and projects on the basis of CO2 savings per pound spent.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 Resources will be required to implement plans and monitor outcomes, so it is proposed to recruit a further project officer to achieve this.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 Climate change is unlikely to be equitable in terms of impacts on the community and specific groups such as the young and old. Therefore, measures taken to reduce carbon can also ensure a more equitable distribution of impact and measures put in place to resolve issues such as overheating in properties.

6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The proposed way forward will allow the Council to mitigate and adapt to climate change and become more sustainable in its operations.

7. Timetable for implementation

- 7.1 The report outlines a timetable to implement actions which will assist us in moving to a net zero position.

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Appendix 1 Spelthorne BC Climate Change Actions to date (May 2021)

Appendix 2 Proposed Recovery Plan actions

Appendix 3 Further Potential issues and projects to consider to reduce carbon in the Borough