

Environment and Sustainability Committee



Date of meeting 10 May 2022

Title	<i>Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Environment
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To support the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021-2025.2. To make a decision on the Borough/District Council's continuing commitment to working in partnership to address climate change.
Reason for Recommendation	This report requests the Committee to consider supporting the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021-2025 (Appendix 1) and working collaboratively with other Surrey partners and authorities to deliver the action set contained within it alongside Spelthorne's Corporate Plan priorities and commitments to address climate change.

1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 Following the publication of Surrey's Climate Change Strategy in May 2020, the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan sets out the next step in meeting the County-wide and organisational net-zero targets. The Plan is designed to demonstrate how residents, communities and business are essential for successful delivery, and sets out what Local Authorities will look at to reduce their own emissions and support, lead, enable and inspire others. Consideration of support by Spelthorne of the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan could potentially enable a clear, coordinated approach that compliments Spelthorne's strategies and plans. Spelthorne through the

corporate plan and its priorities, particularly the Environment priority, is committed to addressing climate change both in its own assets and across the Borough and linking it to economic development and health and wellbeing. Councillors are asked to consider the level of engagement they would wish to see in delivering the plan.

1.2 The Greener Futures Delivery Plan developed by Surrey has as its key aims:

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- A focus on actions to reduce the carbon emissions of both in the Local Authorities and the wider boroughs and districts areas/communities
- Net zero targets and timeframes to align with individual local authority emission targets
- A delivery plan split into 4 areas
- A commitment to climate actions which lead to better outcomes for residents and businesses overall, bringing everyone on the journey through strong public engagement
- A recognition of the importance of partnership working between all 12 Local Authorities in Surrey to maximise shared expertise and make delivery more efficient and cost effective.

2. Key issues

2.1 SCC's Climate change Strategy was published in May 2020 and set out what the Council needed to achieve to decarbonise the county by 2050 and SCC by 2030.

2.2 The **Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021-2025** (Appendix 1) identifies four areas of focus and around 70 key initiatives which seek to reduce carbon emissions across the county by 1.3M tonnes a year by the end of the Delivery Plan. The four focus areas are

- **Greener Futures Communities:** To empower individuals, businesses and communities to reduce emissions in their own homes, communities and workplaces
- **One Net Zero Public Estate:** Local Authorities and other public sector organisations to reduce carbon emissions from their own buildings, vehicle and supply chains and meet the challenging targets that have been set.
- **Build Back Greener:** Design with climate in mind to ensure that planning decisions, regeneration projects and major infrastructure are ready for a zero-carbon future and are adapted to deal with the impacts of climate change on people and wildlife
- **Grow Back Greener** Managing woodland, green spaces and farmland to maximise the ability to absorb carbon from the atmosphere, grow food sustainably and improve habitats needed for wildlife to thrive

- 2.3 The proposal by SCC for all Borough and Districts to adopt the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan (CCDP) has been put to Districts and Boroughs to ask for their support/endorsement. SCC has consulted with Leaders, Portfolio Holders, Chief Executives and climate change officers across Districts and Boroughs on the Plan.
- 2.4 The CCDP seeks to complement and work with existing local plans to take action on Climate Change. The CCDP states: -
- “Around 70 actions have been identified which build on action already being undertaken by Local Authorities (including SCC and 11 Borough and District Councils). As well as setting ambitious targets to reduce emissions in our own organisations. Local Authorities will act to enable others to make changes within their homes, businesses and neighbourhoods. This requires Local Authorities to consider climate change in everything they do. Working closely together, we will seek to maximise shared expertise and make delivery more uniform, efficient and cost effective”
- 2.5 The Surrey District and Borough Climate Change Officers’ Group has been operating for over a year to address climate change issues in the Plan, and more recently is looking to progress joint projects that accelerate change in areas of common interest. These include the development of sustainable procurement policies (Spelthorne has already produced sustainable procurement policies), the formation of consortium bids and streamlining greenhouse gas reporting.
- 2.6 Spelthorne has achieved a considerable amount on climate change reducing its emissions by 40% since 2012. It has undertaken a wide range of climate change measures including significant financial commitments e.g. Green Initiatives Fund (£747k), 4.5M to build a Passivhaus, ie ultra-low energy use, leisure centre and £1.5M of green measures, including heat pumps, for the build of accommodation at Victory Place, solar panels on the roof of the West Wing at Knowle Green and solar panels on both the Depot and nursery roofs.
- 2.7 Decarbonising Spelthorne, and Surrey, creates an opportunity to empower our communities by giving residents the chance to take a leading role in improving their homes, communities, schools and businesses with the added benefit of improved well-being.
- 2.8 Huge levels of necessary investment over the next five to ten years are required to decarbonise homes, buildings and transport. If delivered alongside SBC’s Economic Development strategy and recovery action plan together with SCC’s Infrastructure Plan and the Economy and Growth Strategy, they have the potential to deliver multiple benefits. The investment in Spelthorne’s economic strategy and recovery action plan will drive, within Spelthorne, the creation of new green jobs and supply chain opportunities with a particular focus on our communities which are most impacted by unemployment and poverty. These actions are ongoing, and Spelthorne is already ahead in implementing climate change actions into our economic activities as proposed in the Spelthorne recovery plan.
- 2.9 The benefits of addressing climate change are not just environmental and economic but also social. Targeted measures and investment to tackle climate change can also reduce health inequalities that currently exist in

Spelthorne. Spelthorne has to date made considerable in-roads in installing energy efficient measures in Spelthorne homes through securing grants initially through the National Grid scheme and more recently jointly across Surrey through the Government's LAD scheme. Though the Delivery Plan prioritises the installation of decarbonisation measures in low-income households this is something we have been doing for many years as it can help reduce energy bills – especially now when energy costs are increasing. The schemes significantly reduce levels of fuel poverty and positively impact cold-related deaths and keep more vulnerable residents in their homes through improved energy efficiency yet greater warmth.

- 2.10 We all wish to encourage people to use active travel (walking/ cycling) and public transport, coupled with the shift to electric vehicles, which will improve the health of our residents and reduce air pollution across the county. Spelthorne has with Surrey been fully involved in developing the first stage of a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan to help identify suitable areas for walking and cycling routes.
- 2.11 Investing in trees and habitats has the potential not only to absorb carbon and provide new green space in communities and urban areas where it is limited. Spelthorne has already addressed this issue and planted 1000 trees to date with a view to planting more within the limitations of an urban Borough.
- 2.12 However, across Surrey there are a number of challenges to achieving net zero carbon targets. There is a clear gap between pace and scale of change needed to achieve net zero carbon and restrict an increase in temperature to 1.5 degrees in Surrey, and the resources and levers those local authorities have available to make it happen. Successful delivery of the net zero targets can only be achieved with increased and consistent government funding and targeted policy changes at national level; so lobbying Government and other related parties for further action and investment forms an important feature of the Delivery Plan.
- 2.13 Additionally, the national definition of net zero, and therefore the basis for the 2030 and 2050 net zero targets, only considers “direct emissions” from the use of gas, electricity and transport fuel in buildings and vehicles, and excludes emissions from things manufactured outside of Surrey. Where it can, the Delivery Plan seeks to go beyond this scope to consider all aspects of climate change, including activities that happen outside of the county boundaries that have a carbon impact, such as the carbon footprint of goods and services purchased by Surrey residents and travel by Surrey residents in other parts of the UK and abroad.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 Spelthorne needs to decide on the extent to which it wants to be actively supporting the Delivery Plan, especially bearing in mind that if a County deal were to come about the Greener Futures Board would play an important role in supporting the Surrey Forum and would bring together all tiers of local government to co-ordinate delivery of the Plan.
- 3.2 **Option 1 Recommended** The Committee supports the Delivery Plan. This will provide Spelthorne with opportunities to maximise funding and utilise

shared knowledge to move us forward on addressing climate change at a faster pace than working alone.

- 3.3 **Option 2** The Borough continues to pursue its own agenda and strategy but supports the delivery plan in a wider strategic context including funding but is not put at risk in terms of any inability to deliver on the Delivery Plan's ambitious proposed actions.
- 3.4 **Option 3** The Committee could decide not to support the Delivery Plan but not to support could minimise influence and opportunities, especially in relation to seeking funding for schemes.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 Addressing climate change and reducing to net-zero does not come about without costs even though many of those related to energy pay back over time and others such as those related to biodiversity also contribute to individuals health and well-being, which can also be of economic benefit.
- 4.2 However, there are significant upfront investment needs and Spelthorne has demonstrated its commitment to move to net zero through the Green Initiatives Fund, £4.5M towards ensuring the new leisure centre has very low energy requirements and meets appropriate standards to achieve this (Passivhaus) and £1.5M of energy efficiency measures for the Victory Place Development. We have and do actively seek grants wherever possible to contribute to our climate change initiatives but some of these particularly Government initiatives may be short term and to achieve net zero will need ongoing investment e.g. Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund.

5. Other considerations

- 5.1 There are several risks and issues that would result in Surrey not achieving the target levels of carbon emissions savings set out in the CCDP
- 5.2 The ambitions set out in the Delivery Plan cannot be fully realised without a significant and sustained increase in funding and key policy changes at national level, including introducing planning policies consistent with net-zero targets and policies which make low carbon technologies such as heat pumps cheaper for consumers. Surrey will continue to highlight this through a strong lobbying strategy together with key partners and stakeholders.
- 5.3 There is also a risk that target emission reductions may not be fully achieved due to the number, scale and complexity of actions to be delivered by 2023. Many actions are reliant on residents, businesses and others making low carbon choices. It is proposed these risks are, in part, addressed by improving collaborative working and regular monitoring of the Delivery Plan.
- 5.4 In the plan there is considerable focus on local authority actions and there is a risk that the inability to achieve the goals set will be passed to the districts and boroughs. Therefore, to mitigate this risk we need to continue to develop policy and direction in Spelthorne to drive forward climate change actions which we can deliver on without reducing the pace of change needed to mitigate climate change.
- 5.5 Climate Science already suggest that we need to make cuts in the order of over 40% by the end of the Delivery Plan to avoid an average global temperature rise of 1.5 degrees and that global warming is happening at a

faster rate than originally thought. There is a further risk that new scientific evidence suggests even greater urgency is required.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 A key principle set out in the Climate Change Delivery Plan is that no one should be left behind, focusing financial support towards those least able to pay, or most at risk of suffering the impacts of climate change.
- 6.2 The wide-ranging impacts of the initiatives proposed makes it impossible to produce meaningful equalities impact assess for the whole of the Delivery Plan. As equalities impact assessments will be undertaken as early as possible in the development of the initiatives identified in the Delivery Plan to ensure that these impacts are understood and that no one is left behind in the delivery of this critical agenda. This is a key facet of Spelthorne's approach.

7. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications and Governance

- 7.1 Spelthorne has its own Governance for addressing climate change issues via the Climate Change Working Group and Environment and Sustainability Committee. The Council has proactively reduced its emissions over the last 10 years and continues to seek ways of reducing these further and proactively influence local communities. Therefore, the CCDP could provide extra support for Spelthorne especially when seeking funding opportunities.
- 7.2 However, in addition there are other governance mechanisms in Surrey for climate change including the Greener Futures Board (Appendix 2 terms of reference) which comprises of Leaders representing businesses, residents, public sector and climate experts will act as a challenge and strategic steer function, to oversee progress and provide support to unlock issues and opportunities. Recommendations made by the Board will be taken into account when decisions are made through Surrey's local authorities governance processes. Local authorities will also be able to raise issues at the Board but it is not clear if these groups may be able to direct local authorities at Borough and District level on what they should be doing to achieve net-zero.
- 7.3 The Plan proposes a network of partners to provide feedback on the progress of action on climate change across Surrey and build momentum to support delivery. This includes The Greener Futures Partnership Steering Group; established for County, District & Borough Council Members and Directors to steer the development and delivery of the CCDP and feed into the Greener Futures Board. However, as mentioned above it is not clear if this will be a true partnership or direction.
- 7.4 Progress against Surrey's Climate Change Strategy will be reported formally on an annual basis, with more regular informal reporting, which ensures that the Delivery Plan supports the level of change needed to achieve SCC's 2030 and 2050 net-zero carbon targets.
- 7.5 Spelthorne is developing a climate change action plan, which will be submitted to the next Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting.

8. Timetable for implementation

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9. Contact

9.1 Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Greener Futures Delivery Plan

Appendix 2 Greener Futures Board Terms of Reference