

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

To

Cabinet

On

17th September 2019

Report prepared by: Jeremy Martin, Energy and Sustainability
Manager

**Agenda
Item No.**

Notice of Motion: Climate Emergency Declaration

Relevant Scrutiny Committee(s): Place Scrutiny

Cabinet Member: Councillor C Mulroney

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To present the Notice of Motion: Climate Emergency Declaration which was referred to Cabinet from the Council meeting in July.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That in taking forward the Motion, Cabinet note the current position in respect to the Council's own CO2 emissions which have already been reduced by 75%. Subject to completion of the current capital programme and that proposed in the 2050 outcomes, the Council is expected to achieve net-zero by 2024/5.

- 2.2 That in taking forward the Motion, Cabinet should note the implications of the proposed Declaration of Climate Emergency and its potential impact on all areas of the Council.

- 2.3. That in taking forward the Motion, Cabinet should note the Council's leadership opportunity but that achieving net-zero for the Borough by 2030 will require coordinated actions across all parts of the Borough and will be an enormous undertaking which may take resources from other priorities.

- 2.4. That Cabinet should lobby Government (via LGA) with other Local Authorities to ensure that funds are made available to increase the work towards achieving carbon neutral status.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its Report on Global warming in October 2018 describing the damage that warming at 2°C would inflict compared with 1.5°C and recommending that net-zero emissions be reached by 2030. The Notice of Motion referred to Cabinet seeks to commit the Council to achieve net-zero for its own operations by 2030 (or earlier) and to

work with all other relevant agencies towards making the Borough net-zero by 2030.

- 3.2 A large number of Councils have declared a Climate Emergency and much of the language used has been negative which may reduce the impact of the message by focussing too much on the risks. There is an opportunity to take a leadership role in this work and to assist households, businesses and agencies in Southend to take advantage of the opportunities associated with achieving net-zero.
- 3.3 In the context of the Southend 2050 ambition, the main focus of this work will fall primarily within the Safe and Well Category and the 'Green City' outcome. However, to truly achieve the whole Borough outcome, most parts of the Council and 2050 Outcomes will be involved.
- 3.4 The work on emissions reduction and climate adaptation is currently managed through the Low Carbon Energy and Sustainability Strategy 2015-2020 for which an annual report is published and attached as an Appendix. The report is planned for publication on 17 September to coincide with the Cabinet meeting considering the Climate Emergency Declaration. During the next year, a new Sustainability Strategy will be brought forward linked to the 2050 outcomes and covering all aspects of energy, climate change, green infrastructure and adaptation.
- 3.5 Emissions within Southend were:

2005	904,000 tCO ₂ e
2010	806,000 tCO ₂ e
2012	717,000 tCO ₂ e
2014	644,000 tCO ₂ e
2016	591,000 tCO ₂ e
2017	568,000 tCO ₂ e

Source: ONS dataset Local Authority CO₂ emissions estimates 2005-2017

Based on 2012 data, this equated to the lowest or equal lowest per head of population in England (Cities Outlook 2014). This largely reflects the nature of the business activity in Southend and the relatively dense population. The 2019 publication of Cities Outlook placed Southend as 6th in the league table of CO₂e per head (based on 2016 data) but the overall emissions were down to 591,000tCO₂e – a 35% reduction from 2005. It should be noted that most of this will have resulted from the reduction in grid emissions from electricity. The CO₂ by source within Southend can be broken down in 2 ways – by sector or by fuel (2017 data):

By Sector

Sector	Percentage
Industry and Commercial	23%
Domestic	48%
Transport	29%

By Fuel

Fuel	Percentage
Electricity	27%
Gas	41%
Other	32%

- 3.6 The Council's own emissions from buildings were baselined at 8,000tCO₂e in 2014 and projects have been delivered directly or indirectly reducing these by around 75%. It should be noted that the cost to the Council of these projects to date has been £19m achieved at a profit over 20-25 years. The Council will be responsible for additional emissions but as its own vehicle fleet is small and does very low mileage, these emissions will be small in comparison.
- 3.7 Work proposed within the 2050 Outcome Delivery Plans for 2020/21 contain enough to move the Council to a net-zero position or better following completion.
- 3.8 Achieving net-zero emissions within the whole borough will require contributions from all parts of Southend, households, business, charities and public sector. This undertaking will need to form part of the communications and strategies across all parts of the Council and Borough agenda.
- 3.9 The Council should also recognise that a drive towards eliminating emissions is only a part of the Climate Equation and may conflict with the other priorities of the Council. Adaptation to Climate Change already embedded in the system will be as important as Climate Mitigation through emissions reduction.
- 3.10 Whilst the concept of improving environment and cutting emissions may be welcomed by most of the public, some actions that are necessary to achieve the objective of net-zero may not be so popular.

4. Other Options

- 4.1. To note the Notice of Motion but not to declare the Climate Emergency.
- 4.2. To note the Notice of Motion but to declare the Climate Emergency targeting a later date for implementation.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1. Major reductions in emissions are required across the world to mitigate against climate change and hold global warming to less than 2°C, preferably 1.5°C.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1. Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

The primary 2050 outcome that the Climate Emergency Declaration will affect will be *Safe and Well: We act as a green city with outstanding examples of energy*

efficient and carbon neutral buildings, green open spaces, streets, transport and recycling.

It is likely that to achieve the commitments made in the declaration actions will be needed in every 2050 outcome and every function of the Council.

6.2 Financial Implications

The total value of implementation of the commitments has not been costed and not all will fall onto the Council but are likely to be very large – almost certainly above £1-1.5bn. Some could be delivered within existing resources as part of work underway to deliver the Southend 2050 ambition while others could be achieved through reprioritisation of existing resources. There are some actions which must involve partners and their resources including households and businesses. Some of the large, significant interventions would likely require additional funding through borrowing, grant funding or private sector funding which is available for profitable projects in this arena. It may be that the Council will need to act as a co-investor and/or be prepared to guarantee counter-party risk especially within early projects. It is likely that many of the projects required to meet the commitments will also have economic advantages in revenue available and potential economic growth.

Any proposals for additional investment and/or disinvestment will need to be considered as relevant as parts of outcome delivery plans and our outcome based budgeting approach, as part of Council budget setting and in year financial management.

6.3 Legal Implications

None at this time. In delivering individual delivery actions the legal implications of each action would be considered.

6.4 People Implications

It is likely that delivery of the recommendations would require refocussing of officer time in a substantial way. Another aspect that should be considered is that the current team leading on Energy and Climate Change are almost wholly funded from the projects that they deliver including EU project funds. Over time, this funding approach may not be sustainable.

6.5 Property Implications

None at this time. Some of the actions to reduce emissions and generate electricity will have property implications and the usual process would be followed at the appropriate time.

6.6 Consultation

The Notice of Motion was presented to Council in July and consultation has been restricted to the Climate Change/Sustainability team, the 2050 'Green City' leads and the Corporate Management team.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

An Equalities Assessment has not been undertaken on the totality of the project report and individual assessments would need to be undertaken for the various projects and policy changes as part of their development.

6.8 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment has not been undertaken on the project report as, where appropriate, risk assessments would be undertaken in relation into the various interventions.

6.9 Community Safety Implications

Community Safety will need to be reviewed as part of each intervention considered.

6.11 Environmental Impact

The Climate Emergency Declaration will have very large environmental impacts only when the actions are taken to deliver on the commitments made. A net 560,000tCO₂ will be required to be removed from direct sources in Southend. It should be noted that reaching net-zero in Southend will contribute to reduction in global warming but will not, of itself, protect the Borough from future climate change impacts. This is both because there are substantial impacts already baked into the system but also because similar, effective action would be required by every other local authority and nation across the globe.

7. Background Papers

None.

8. Appendices

2018/19 Annual Report – Low Carbon Energy and Sustainability Strategy