

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Report of Interim Executive Director for Neighbourhoods
& Environment

To

Cabinet

On

12th January 2023

Report prepared by: Jo Gay, Interim Head of Waste and
Climate Change

Agenda
Item No.

Draft Urban Heat Strategy – Approval to Undertake Public Consultation

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Place
Cabinet Member: Councillor Cllr Carole Mulronee
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Council's first draft Urban Heat Strategy. It is part of the Council's suite of strategy documents that provide guidance on climate adaptation and resilience for development across the city.
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval to undertake public consultation so that the strategy can be adopted.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council notes the guidance and recommendations in the strategy.
- 2.2 That the Council approves the draft Urban Heat Strategy for public consultation, as the next step towards formal adoption by the Council as a corporate strategy.
- 2.3 That the Council confers delegated authority to the Executive Director for Neighbourhoods and Environment and the portfolio holder for the Environment to adopt the Heat Stress Strategy post consultation.

3. Background

- 3.1 Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC), is one of 14 partners in the Interreg Cool Towns project which promotes climate resilience through the reduction of heat stress. The organisations collaborating on this project include regional and municipal governments, industry partners and academics from across the UK and Europe.
- 3.2 The Urban Heat Stress Strategy is one of the deliverables from the project. It assesses the risk of heat stress in the City and sets out options to mitigate that impact. The strategy aligns with Government's Heatwave Plan which was originally published in 2014 and was updated in August 2022.

3.3 Heat Stress, as defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), occurs when the body's means of controlling its internal temperature starts to fail. Densely populated urban areas like Southend, experience greater heat stress than rural areas due to high levels of surfaces eg concrete, asphalt which absorb heat, and buildings in close proximity to each other which trap heat. Increased traffic levels and air pollution can also contribute to increased temperatures in urban areas. There are often areas within cities that retain more heat than others and these are described as Heat Islands.

3.4 Heat stress can lead to increased morbidity and mortality in vulnerable populations. Elderly people, those with underlying health problems, young children and those experiencing high levels of deprivation, are at increased risk of experiencing heat stress.

3.5 The Strategy analyses the following data:

- Heat in different areas of the City at different times of day.
- Areas with higher and lower cooling potential.
- Vegetation distribution across the City, including urban parks and tree canopy cover.
- Population density variation across Southend.
- Health vulnerability across Southend.
- Distribution of the very young, and the very elderly across Southend.
- Distribution of deprivation across the City including populations with low incomes.

3.6 The results show Westborough Ward is most susceptible to extreme heat, Shoeburyness has a relatively high level of retained heat, but the highest levels are in the City Centre. The Strategy sets out:

- How it integrates with existing SCC corporate strategies, as well as subregional and national strategies.
- Key locations for interventions.
- Options for mitigation.

4. Other Options

4.1 The Urban Heat Strategy does not undergo a public consultation and the document is used as unadopted guidance.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 The Urban Heat Stress Strategy is an important document for the authority, setting a strategic position for climate adaptation

- Heat stress has wide reaching implications for the City's public health (increasing mortality and morbidity rates);
- Planning and Regeneration (mitigation options for new buildings);
- Parks and Open Spaces (increased tree canopy and enhanced parks and open spaces);
- Highways (reduction in infrastructure damage), and

- The Council's statutory responsibility as Flood Risk Authority (appropriate green infrastructure interventions at the appropriate locations).
- Operational Planning – ensuring there are appropriate mitigations in place for the significant number of visitors to the City (March to October)

5.2 By reviewing the heat data, alongside socioeconomic and demographic data, the areas most impacted can be identified and the Council can provide a more holistic response to heat stress through existing and forthcoming corporate strategies.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

Pride and Joy: supporting the commitment to be a green and climate resilient City.

Safe and Well: protecting and improving the quality of life for all residents.

Active and Involved: access to improved green and open spaces.

6.2 Environmental Impact

6.2.1 The Environmental Impact of the public consultation, carried out in accordance with the Council's policies will be minimal.

6.3 Financial Implications

6.3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report, as the public consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Council's existing processes. Where heat stress mitigation measures are delivered on corporate assets, there may be financial implications related to maintenance of measures, but this will be offset by reduced energy demand.

6.4 Legal Implications

6.4.1 There are no Legal implications associated with undertaking a public consultation on the Urban Heat Stress Strategy.

6.5 People Implications

6.5.1 There are no People implications associated with carrying out the public consultation.

6.6 Property Implications

6.6.1 There are no Property implications associated with carrying out the public consultation.

6.7 Consultation

6.7.1 This document is seeking approval to undertake a public consultation.

6.8 Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.8.1 The public consultation will be carried out in accordance with Southend's corporate processes, and equalities objectives.

6.9 Risk Assessment

6.9.1 There are no risks associated with undertaking a public consultation on this document.

6.10 Value for Money

6.10.1 The value of carrying out the public consultation is high, as it will ensure that the guidance in the document can be adopted and integrated into existing and forthcoming strategies.

6.11 Community Safety Implications

6.11.1 There are no Community Safety implications associated with the public consultation process

7. Background Papers

7.1 There are no background papers associated with this report.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Urban Heat Strategy