

**Environment and Sustainable
Communities Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**



30 April 2019

**Approach on the Report to Full Council
Regarding Climate Emergency Declaration**

Joint report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnership and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

1. To describe to Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee the proposed approach in the drafting of a report to full Council scheduled for 17 July 2019 in describing how Council and County climate change targets may be met.
2. To allow the opportunity for Scrutiny Members to influence this approach through any comments they may have.

Executive summary

3. Full Council require an outline plan on how Council and County Durham carbon targets are to be met. This is scheduled for 17 July 2019.
4. The proposed approach, which is subject to Members' views, is to provide in this future Council report an outline of the series of measures either by the Council or working with partners that will make progress in achieving them. However, this work is intended as the start of a process and not an end, and therefore it is proposed to facilitate a series of workshops and events in the Autumn, to generate more interest and carbon reducing initiatives across the community and business sector, as well as understanding more about the barriers that exist, so that they can be addressed where possible.

5. Arrangements have been made for Oliver Sherratt, Head of Environment to attend the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC on the 30 April 2019 to deliver a presentation seeking scrutiny's comments on the approach to the six month plan.

Recommendation

6. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the content of the report and presentation.
7. That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes in its future work programme for 2019/2020 the monitoring of the progress made in relation to the further development of the plan and the identified targets.

Background

8. On 20 February 2019 full Council declared a climate emergency and adopted for Durham County Council a 60% reduction from its 2008/9 levels of carbon emissions by 2030 and also resolved to investigate what further actions are necessary to make County Durham carbon neutral by 2050.
9. In furtherance of this, it was resolved that a report was required to Full Council within six months with the actions the Council will need to take to achieve the new 2030 target and supply an initial report on what actions would be required to achieve a carbon neutral County Durham by 2050.
10. Six months from the date of the resolution is 20th August 2019, and therefore accounting for Council recess, it is proposed to have the report come to Council on 17th July 2019. This will be accompanied by a series of displays and demonstrations to highlight some of the work already underway.

Approach to the Report

11. Oliver Sherratt, Head of Environment will present to Members the intended approach to culminate in the report on 17th July 2019. Given the copious context of international and national strategy and law, whilst vitally important as a framework, it is not proposed that the report would recite our obligations. Instead its prime focus will be a pragmatic approach as to how the targets may be met.

12. Crucial in developing the approach is the context that Durham County Council only contributes 3% of total carbon emissions in the County compared to 97% from external sources both domestic, commercial and industrial. The role of the County Council, is therefore not one solely of setting the best possible example, but key elements of the plan need to set out how countywide reductions can be better achieved facilitating through awareness, support, partnership, regulation and where necessary national lobbying.
13. The proposed report before full Council will contain a wide range of ideas and an outline action plan. It should however be seen as just a start, with a series of stakeholder engagement meetings and workshops proposed to further develop and detail how we can, working together address this vital issue.
14. The presentation to Members will provide a draft scope of the full Council report so that Scrutiny can influence its shaping. Furthermore, the vital role of Scrutiny is also recognised, in not only overseeing progress against targets, but crucially identifying gaps, and lobbying for changes in regulation, taxation or law as felt necessary.

Conclusion

15. Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be aware of the climate emergency that has been declared.
16. The Council has set some ambitious long term targets, and an outline plan to be presented to Council on 17th July will present a range of actions, many underway. It is important that these are well coordinated and the proposals will set out some suggestions on governance. The plan itself will not contain all the answers however, and therefore a series of stakeholder engagement exercises are proposed as part of its on-going development. Scrutiny will have a crucial role in monitoring progress and identifying barriers to this, should they arise.

Background papers

- The Climate Emergency motion that was passed on 20th February 2019 is attached as Appendix 3 (Agenda item 5)

Contact:

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

The proposal is for a series of stakeholder engagement meetings and workshops on the plan to take place from autumn 2019.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

A changing climate will impact on everyone, across the world, but research suggests that the poorest people are likely to suffer the worst impacts, so reducing carbon emissions now will contribute to future equality

Human Rights

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Durham County Council has declared a climate emergency and set targets against a backdrop of national and international protest and will mitigate any risk by undertaking detailed planning and consultation.

Procurement

Not applicable