

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	18 MARCH 2019		
TITLE:	CLIMATE EMERGENCY		
SERVICE:	PLANNING DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD CLLR:	CLLR PAGE		
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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report summarises the Council's intention in respect of the motion brought to full Council declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and sets out the intended course of action.
- 1.2 In February 2019 the Council received a petition from 798 residents urging the Council to declare a Climate Emergency.
- 1.3 A motion was brought by the Council confirming that the Council believes the world is now in a 'Climate Emergency' and committing the Council to play a full role in achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.
- 1.4 The Council instructed officers to report to the SEPT and Policy Committees on further potential measures that could accelerate the timescale for reducing carbon dioxide emissions to zero by 2030, but recognises that this date can only be achieved with substantial policy changes from national government.
- 1.5 The Council also requests officers to ensure that forthcoming revisions to the Local Transport Plan and Climate Change Strategy (and any other relevant policy statements) reflect the urgency of this resolution.
- 1.6 The Council additionally instructs the Chief Executive to write to our local MPs, and to the Prime Minister and to relevant Government departments (DEFRA, MHCLG, DfT, and Treasury) setting out the

above requirements and the need for new legislation and financial support to deliver this radical agenda.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the Committee instructs officers to bring a report to the next Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee on further potential measures that could accelerate the timescale for reducing carbon dioxide emissions to zero by 2030.**
- 2.2 That the committee instructs the Chief Executive of the Council to write to local MPs, the Prime Minister and to relevant Government Departments setting out the requirements and the need for new Legislation and financial support to deliver this agenda.**
- 2.3 That the Committee instructs officers to ensure that upcoming strategy revisions including the Local Transport Plan and Climate Change Strategies reflect the urgency of the resolution.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The current Climate Change Strategy for Reading 2013-2020 (Reading Means Business on Climate Change), was in Sept 2013.**
- 3.2 The strategy sets out a vision for Reading for 2020, with low carbon being the norm in 2050. It proposes a target for the Borough as a whole to reduce emissions by 34% by 2020 (against a 2005 baseline). In 2016 Reading had reduced its carbon footprint by 41%.**
- 3.3 In December 2015, the UK, alongside 195 other nations, agreed to sign the global Climate Agreement in Paris. The agreement seeks to reduce emissions to limit global warming by two degrees, with an ambition to seek to limit it to one and a half degrees. The agreement came into force in November 2016.**
- 3.4 In line with the commitment made in Paris, the Council became a signatory to the UK100 Clean Energy Pledge alongside over 80 other local authorities in the UK. An extract of the pledge is shown below:**

***We have the ambition of making all our towns and cities across the UK 100% clean before 2050, in line with the commitments made nationally and internationally at the Paris Summit.***

- 3.5 At Full Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019, a petition was received from Extinction Rebellion calling for the Council to support the following goals:**

- Declaring a Climate Emergency.
- Pledging to make the borough of Reading carbon neutral by 2030.
- Developing a detailed action plan and reporting back to the Council in six months time.
- Reviewing all existing policies, strategies and procedures in light of these new objectives.

3.6 At the same meeting the Council moved a motion (appended) declaring a climate emergency and resolving to take action to accelerate a carbon neutral Reading to 2030.

#### **4.0 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

4.1 The Council has made a commitment to lead in tackling climate change in Reading, adopting the 2013-2020 Climate Change Strategy.

4.2 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the following Service Priorities:

- Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing homes for those in most need
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities

4.3 The Climate Change Strategy sets out its strategic priorities, which feed into all of these service priorities, in particular through protecting those vulnerable to fuel poverty and in creating a low carbon economy and infrastructure fit for the future.

#### **5.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

5.1 Widespread community engagement will take place in due course in the updating of a range of Council strategies including the upcoming revisions to the Reading Climate Change Strategy and Local Transport Plan.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The legal implications will be reported when specific plans and proposals are brought in due course.

#### **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The financial implications will be reported when specific plans and proposals are brought in due course.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 Motion agreed at Full Council 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
- 8.2 Extract of Full Council minutes 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019