

<b>MAYOR AND CABINET</b>			
<b>Report Title</b>	Response to a recommendation made by the Sustainable Development Select Committee in relation to 'Home Energy'		
<b>Key Decision</b>	No		
<b>Ward</b>			
<b>Contributors</b>	Acting Chief Finance Officer Director of Law		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date:	20 November 2019

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the response to a recommendation by the Sustainable Development Select Committee in relation funding the Council's work on climate emergency.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet agrees the proposed actions and response set out in section 5 below to the recommendation made by the Sustainable Development Select Committee.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1 In 2016, the UK Government ratified the Paris Agreement, part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Agreement commits countries to take action to prevent the global average temperature increasing 2°C above pre-industrial levels. In 2017 the Government published its Clean Growth Strategy setting out its approach to delivering on its greenhouse gas emission targets and in 2019 the Government approved legislation committing the UK to a legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050.
- 3.2 Lewisham's Corporate Plan 2018-22 includes commitments to maximise opportunities for energy efficiency and to provide support on energy bills for vulnerable residents.
- 3.3 In February 2019 Lewisham Council declared a Climate Emergency and proposed a target to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030.

#### **4. Recommendation by the Sustainable Development Select Committee**

4.1 On Tuesday 4 June 2019 the Sustainable Development Select Committee considered a report outlining the Council's plans on domestic energy and fuel poverty with particular reference to the response to the Council's declaration of a climate emergency.

4.2 Following consideration of this report the Committee resolved to advise Mayor and Cabinet of the following:

- The Committee welcomes the work being carried out by officers to deliver home energy efficiency in the borough. It also welcomes the initial work that is taking place in response to the Council's declaration of a climate emergency. However, the Committee believes that officers working in this area need additional resources to deliver this work.
- The Committee believes that one way to increase funding would be to provide upfront backing for 'green projects' (such as solar installations or other micro generation projects) in the borough that would deliver a sustainable longer-term financial return. This may result in added support for Lewisham's most vulnerable households whilst also generating resources for future work by the Council. The Committee would welcome a written response from Mayor and Cabinet alongside the attendance of the relevant Cabinet Member at a future Sustainable Development Select Committee meeting in order to provide details of the Executive's response to this proposal.

#### **5. Resourcing Lewisham Council's Climate Emergency work**

5.1 Key themes underpinning the response to the Council's declaration of a climate emergency include:

- action on climate change is, first and foremost, action for social justice since a changing climate will impact most significantly on the vulnerable and those with lowest income;
- we should be ambitious in our approach. Lewisham has an opportunity to be a leader in London and for the public sector on this increasingly urgent issue;
- the scope of our ambition should extend beyond what is easily measured or in our direct control because many of these factors, such as aviation and food, will have the biggest impact on climate change;
- taking action on climate change has a wide range of co-benefits for health, for wellbeing and the local economy;
- we should strengthen the connections between our work on carbon emissions and other Council activity on air quality, waste & recycling, sustainable transport, biodiversity, flood risk and green spaces;
- urban living is low carbon living: Lewisham already has the second lowest carbon emissions per capita in the UK;

5.2 As the Sustainable Development Select Committee has highlighted there is currently limited budget available in the Council specifically to deliver carbon reduction initiatives. However in delivering on the commitment to be carbon neutral the focus should however rightly be on influencing the Council's

mainstream programmes and decision-making, particularly as investment in action on climate change has the potential for a range of co-benefits for the local economy, health and wellbeing.

- 5.3 Officers have already progressed initiatives such as Lewisham's new Community Energy Fund launched in September, the borough's advice service for vulnerable residents at risk of the cold, as well as participation in the London 'Solar Together' initiative that allows Lewisham residents to benefit from bulk purchasing of solar panels to reduce costs.
- 5.4 It is also important to be clear that the Council should not be seen as being liable to meet the full costs of delivering on carbon reduction, and that central government should be pressed to take action and provide resources to deliver on national targets. In addition landlords, home owners and businesses should all be encouraged and enabled to provide the investment that will be needed to deliver a carbon neutral borough.
- 5.5 There are however areas where more action is urgently needed locally and there is no officer specifically dedicated to this work. Given the need for urgent and wide ranging action at all levels the public and private sector nationally and regionally is going to have to provide greater funding to deliver on the commitments that have been made. Those organisations that are proactive and engaged on this agenda will be best placed to make use of this resource. It is therefore proposed that the Council's funds a 2 year contract for a new post to work in the Climate Resilience Team that will:
- Seek out new opportunities for funding including the use of revolving funding outlined in the Sustainable Developments Select Committee recommendation;
  - Drive engagement work with schools;
  - Shape and coordinate work planned as part of a cultural legacy on climate change action around the Borough of Culture bid;
  - Drive a better coordination with other environmental services;
  - Work with the communications team to raise the scope and reach of our interaction with residents;
  - Lead our work with staff to change the culture of the organisation.
- 5.6 It is proposed that the budget required to fund this work is circa £110,000. The detail of this will be subject to the Council's standard job evaluation and recruitment policies and procedures. Identifying funding for this post will be considered as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 This report recommends that the Mayor and Cabinet agrees the proposed actions and response set out in section 5 to the recommendation made by the Sustainable Development Select Committee. This includes the creation of a new post in the Climate Resilience team that would be funded for two years at a cost of approximately £110,000. Identifying funding for this post will be considered as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process.

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 The Council's Constitution sets out the procedures relating to reports referred to the Mayor from a scrutiny committee. The Constitution sets a timescale of two months (not including recess) for a formal reply from receipt of such reports.

## **8. Crime and disorder implications**

- 8.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications resulting from this report.

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 There are no specific equalities implications resulting from this report, however the impact of climate change in relation to extreme weather events, and rising energy, insurance and other household costs will have a disproportionate effect on vulnerable residents.

## **10. Environmental implications**

- 10.1 There are no specific environmental implications resulting from this report however, as noted in the Council motion to declare a climate emergency:

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, published in October 2018, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise. The IPCC identify that limiting global warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector and local communities;

In Lewisham, the consequences of inaction to address this climate emergency will include:

- Increased risk of flooding and damage to buildings, infrastructure and the local economy.
- Health problems, particularly for children, older people and those with pre-existing conditions.
- Higher living costs including energy, food, travel and insurance costs.
- Increases in social injustice and inequality.
- Financial and emotional consequences for residents with families around the world adversely affected by the impact of a changing climate

## **11. Conclusion**

- 11.1 It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet notes the approach set out in section 5 above and agrees this as the response to the recommendation made by the Sustainable Development Select Committee.

If there are any queries on this report please contact **Martin O'Brien, Climate Resilience Manager**, 020 8314 6605.

### **Background Documents**

- Lewisham's Home Energy Conservation Report (2019)  
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s65556/05%20Home%20energy%20conservation%20040619.pdf>