



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Update on “A Greener Future”

Date: 08 March 2022

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Assistant Chief Executive

Outline and recommendations

This report provides an update on some of the recommendations made at the September Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting (where a report on A Greener Future / Climate Change was considered).

Overview and Scrutiny is recommended to note, and comment on, the contents of this update.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report at its meeting on 30 November 2021, providing an update on delivery of Lewisham’s Climate Emergency Action Plan for the committee. The report set this in the context of wider environmental considerations and service delivery across the Council. This report provides an update on the committee’s recommendations which were made following consideration of that report.

1. Summary

1.1. At the last meeting of the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was agreed that:

- Each select committee should appoint a climate change champion to ensure that (a) the annual work programme takes climate change matters into account; and (b) officers are given appropriate steers in relation to the reports for specific items, to ensure they include relevant climate change considerations.
- Planning Members receive training on the interaction between the climate

emergency and the planning process.

- There is an annual all-member briefing on the climate emergency covering the action taken and action planned by the council and partners - and information on any constraints and challenges.

1.2. This paper provides an update on the implementation of these recommendations.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Overview and Scrutiny is recommended to note and comment on the contents of this update report.

3. Policy Context

3.1 Lewisham's Corporate Strategy priority 'Making Lewisham Greener' includes the following commitments relating to energy:

- We will maximise opportunities for energy efficiency in all council buildings and new developments;
- We will explore working with publicly owned not-for profit energy suppliers that do not penalise poorer residents using prepay meters.

3.2 The borough's Covid-19 recovery plan, 'Future Lewisham', has four strategic themes which support what the council wants for every single resident. One of the themes is "A Greener Future":

Our next steps will be our greenest yet, continuing our efforts to preserve our climate for future generations and ensuring everyone can enjoy the place we call home. We will capture and build on the best of what we saw from the increase in walking and cycling locally, and all the other ways our environment benefitted from behaviour changes over the last year. We will nurture and protect the place we call home so that we can continue to appreciate its benefits for generations to come.

3.3 The actions and the values of Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan support delivery of outcomes across the Corporate Strategy, in particular:

- 'Tackling the housing crisis' and improved standards across all housing sectors
- 'Building an inclusive local economy' and supporting the growth of a thriving local economy
- 'Making Lewisham greener' and the increased use of environmentally friendly transport as well as better care for our local environment and planet.

3.4 The Council's values shape interactions and behaviours across the organisational hierarchy, between officers, and members, between the council and partners and between the council and residents. In delivering our duties, we are guided by the Council's four core values:

- We put service to the public first
- We respect all people and all communities
- We invest in employees
- We are open, honest, and fair in all we do.

4 Climate Change Champions

4.1 The following Climate Change Champions have been appointed by Select Committees:

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- Healthier Communities – Cllr Sophie Davis
- Safer, Stronger Communities – To be agreed
- Children and Young People – Cllr Jack Lavery
- Housing – Cllr Stephen Penfold
- Public Accounts – Cllr James Royston
- Sustainable Development – Cllr Leo Gibbons

4.2 Climate change is a cross cutting issue which affects the whole council. The Climate Change Champions will work with the Select Committee Chairs to ensure that the committee's work encompasses this crucial agenda and supports the council in becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

5 Training for Planning Members

5.1 The Committee recommended that Planning Members receive training on the interaction between the climate emergency and the planning process. The Centre for Sustainable Energy will be providing this training to planning members on 28 March 2022. The training, and the information pack that accompanies the training, will aim to cover the following, although the trainer will try to focus on what is most relevant to Lewisham:

- Carbon emissions and temperatures
- The legislative framework – carbon reduction commitments
- The legal planning framework
- Planning duties in respect of climate adaptation + mitigation
- Zero carbon standards for new Buildings – the LETI standard
- Building regulations and Building codes
- Regulated and Unregulated carbon emissions
- Embodied carbon
- Different carbon factors
- The impact of green measures on viability assessments
- Retrofitting historic buildings and issues relating to conservation areas
- Heat Networks
- Transport emissions reductions.

6 An annual all member briefing

6.1 The Committee recommended that there should be an annual all-member briefing on the climate emergency covering the action taken and action planned by the council and partners - and information on any constraints and challenges. The first briefing will take place in January 2023, then each subsequent January. The briefing has been scheduled to link into the Mayor and Cabinet reporting schedule to ensure that any comments made by members at the annual all-member briefing are taken into account when Mayor and Cabinet consider their annual climate change update in March of each year.

7 Financial implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report, but delivery of an ambitious programme to cut emissions across the Council's corporate estate and the borough as a whole has potentially significant cost implications. Work undertaken to support the development of Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan estimated a minimum cost of £1.6bn over 10 years.

7.2 Lewisham Council's funding from government has been cut by over 58% since 2013/14, while at the same time the Council has faced increased costs through

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population growth, changes to government policy and other pressures including COVID19. There are no extra resources available to local authorities that declare a climate emergency and the council will need to find creative ways to find the resources needed to support this work.

8 Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The Select Committee Climate Change Champions are informal positions where one member of the committee, with the support of the Chair, agrees to speak up in support of climate change matters when the work programme report is considered at each meeting – ensuring that when items are decided on, climate change matters are taken into account. In addition, when the reports for the next meeting are discussed, they ensure that officers are given appropriate steers by the committee so that the reports take climate change matters into account. They are informal roles so are not agreed by council and do not have terms of reference (although a committee could choose to tightly specify the role if they wish to do so).
- 8.2 Local authorities can use their own powers to take actions in relation to climate change. The relevant powers are likely to include the wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which allows local authorities to do anything that individuals generally may do. The existence of the general power is not limited by the existence of any other power of the Council which (to any extent) overlaps the general power.

9 Equalities implications

- 9.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising directly from this report but it should be noted that the risks and impacts of a changing climate will not fall equally, and without action the consequences will exacerbate poverty and health inequalities globally and locally.
- 9.2 In addition, given the fundamental nature of the changes needed, there are considerable risks that the actions taken to limit carbon emissions could, in themselves, disadvantage low income and vulnerable individuals and communities. The COVID-19 pandemic is forecast to result in a 6% global decrease in energy demand in 2020, a reduction that has come at huge social and economic cost. This impact underlines that delivering on a climate agenda needs the UK Government to break the links between economic prosperity and carbon, and that locally, our strategy should be to address climate change as an issue of social justice and the focus of climate emergency actions should be on low income and vulnerable individuals and communities.
- 9.3 Further work is needed to fully identify the equalities implications of climate change for Lewisham residents.

10 Climate change and environmental implications

- 10.1 These are addressed in the body of this report.

11 Crime and disorder implications

- 11.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12 Health and wellbeing implications

- 12.1 Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan will deliver a range of health and wellbeing benefits to residents, including actions to improve air quality, increased participation in active travel as well as support for low income and vulnerable households to cut the cost of staying warm in winter.

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13 Background papers

13.1 [Report to Overview and Scrutiny on 30 November 2021](#)

14 Report author and contact

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