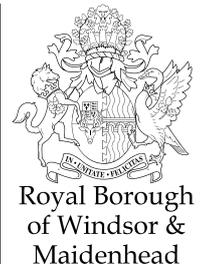


Subject:	Climate Strategy – Update
Reason for briefing note:	Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Responsible officer(s):	James Thorpe, Sustainability and Climate Change Lead
Senior leader sponsor:	Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth
Date:	16 th September 2021

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SUMMARY

The Council adopted its Environment and Climate strategy in December 2021. The strategy set out how the borough will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest. It included an action plan for the next 5 years detailing the work that will be undertaken to ensure we make immediate progress towards the 2050 target.

Since adoption, the Council has strengthened its Sustainability and Climate Change Team, recruiting two new Sustainability Officers and moving the Countryside Manager and Landscape Officer into the team to provide additional resource.

The Council has made good progress against the action plan. Key achievements have included securing external funding in excess of £1 million to deliver energy projects within the Borough, drafting a Biodiversity Action Plan and helping facilitate the launch of a Repair Café in Maidenhead.

Officers have met regularly with members as well as working closely with community to deliver specific actions. The Council has proposed a new Borough-wide Climate Partnership, involving public and private sector organisations, community groups and residents.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and committed to developing a strategy to achieve a target of net zero carbon emissions in the borough by 2050, in line with the Government policy.
- 1.2 A cross-party steering group was set up to oversee development of the strategy.
- 1.3 Numerous workshops and meetings were held with the community to ensure they were involved through the development and a draft of the strategy was put out to public consultation.
- 1.4 The strategy has 4 main themes: Energy, Circular Economy, Natural Environment and Transport. Under each theme, there is a detailed action plan covering the period 2020-25.
- 1.5 The draft strategy for public consultation was unanimously approved by Council in June 2020 and at Cabinet in December 2020, the Environment and Climate Strategy was approved.

2 STAFFING CHANGES

- 2.1 Following adoption of the strategy in December 2020, there have been significant changes to the resourcing of the Sustainability and Climate Change Team. A new Sustainability and Climate Change Lead has been appointed with two new roles created within the team to support project delivery and engagement.
- 2.2 In addition, the Council's Countryside Manager and Landscape Officer have been moved into the Sustainability and Climate Change Team to provide additional resource to deliver the natural environment theme of the strategy.
- 2.3 The team is responsible for a variety of things in addition to the Environment and Climate strategy including utilities management, nature reserves and responding to planning applications from a landscape and climate perspective.

3 ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- 3.1 The Environment and Climate Strategy includes an action plan, split across the four themes, that details the key actions the Council will undertake between 2020-25. Linked to each of these are a combination of action-based targets and outcome-based targets.
- 3.2 There are dates against some of the actions in the strategy and the Council has prioritised work on those with a target date of 2021. For actions without a specific date, an internal delivery plan covering the period up until 2025 has been developed to ensure we best manage resources.
- 3.3 Detailed below are some of the achievements to date under each of the themes included in the strategy.
- 3.4 Circular Economy
 - 3.4.1. The Council has agreed and implemented changes to its kerbside waste collection regime which is expected to drive up recycling rates. During 2020/21, the Council hit its 50% target for household waste recycling although there was also a big increase in overall household waste due to the pandemic.
 - 3.4.2. A methodology has been agreed with community partners to measure progress on waste reduction and recycling.
 - 3.4.3. A Repair Café has been launched in Maidenhead by the community with support of the Council. This will help residents repair things that they may otherwise have disposed of. We are now looking at supporting further Repair Cafés in other parts of the Borough.
 - 3.4.4. The Single Use Plastics Strategy has been approved by the Council and a delivery plan has been developed in partnership with Plastic Free groups.
- 3.5 Energy
 - 3.5.1. New planning guidance has been adopted by the Council to drive sustainability in new builds
 - 3.5.2. £857,000 has been secured to deliver air source heat pump installations and insulation in low income, energy inefficient homes in the Borough.
 - 3.5.3. £205,000 has been secured to upgrade lighting to LED in 14 buildings including 12 schools. Work has now been completed in 13 of the 14 buildings with the remaining school to be completed during October half term.

- 3.5.4. £65,000 has been secured to undertake a heat mapping analysis exercise in the Borough to identify opportunities for low carbon heat and heat networks. Procurement of this study is now underway.
- 3.5.5. Discussions with neighbouring authorities are underway to launch a collective solar scheme within the next 6 months to help facilitate the installation of solar photovoltaic panels onto resident's homes
- 3.5.6. £165,000 of funding has recently been secured to undertake heat decarbonisation plans across 19 schools, 10 libraries the Guildhall and the Town Hall.

3.6 Natural Environment

- 3.6.1. The Council has worked closely with Wild community groups in the Borough to produce a draft Biodiversity Action Plan which is currently being consulted on.
- 3.6.2. A new nature trail through Ockwells has been built including new signage which has improved access to the site but also protected the wildflowers growing there.
- 3.6.3. A pilot scheme for the community to adopt planters in their local area has been launched in Eton Wick and West Windsor.
- 3.6.4. Funding has been secured to extend the Braywick Nature Vision series of education films and virtual school trips
- 3.6.5. 5400 new trees have been planted during the 2020/21 planting season mainly at the Ockwells site.
- 3.6.6. To celebrate the Queen's Canopy initiative, all state schools in the Borough have been offered trees and all wards in the Borough will have a tree planted to mark the occasion.
- 3.6.7. Education sessions have restarted (post-COVID) at the Braywick Nature Centre with hundreds of children from local schools benefitting from hands on biodiversity training during the summer term.

3.7 Transport

- 3.7.1. A new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is being developed and member engagement sessions have been held to input.
- 3.7.2. A new Bus Strategy is being developed with Cabinet approving an enhanced partnerships approach.
- 3.7.3. An Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy is being developed with a specialist consultant procured to undertake the next stage of the plan.
- 3.7.4. Volkors have begun trials on embedding sustainability into their maintenance of the highways
- 3.7.5. The Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Smart City project which the Council participated in has been awarded the ADEPT President Award.
- 3.7.6. A Berkshire wide digital infrastructure strategy is under development in collaboration with the other Berkshire councils and the LEP.

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Council has developed a proposal for a Borough wide Climate Partnership recognising that to succeed, we require the active support and input from a cross-section of external partners. Further development and launch of this will be completed by the end of March 2021.

- 4.2 An internal delivery plan has been developed to allocate work to specific officers and set a timeline for delivery of all actions listed by the strategy by 2025.
- 4.3 Work will continue to deliver the strategy with important projects planned over the next 6 months on residential energy efficiency, collective solar purchasing and the biodiversity action plan.