

AGENDA ITEM NO 8

TITLE: ECDC ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – CONSIDERATION OF RESOURCES REQUIRED

Committee: Finance and Assets Committee

Date: 23 July 2020

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[V39]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 On 17 October 2019, Full Council passed a 'climate change motion', which declared a climate emergency and agreed a number of actions to take place. On 8 June 2020, Operational Services Committee approved the Council's first 'Environment Plan', which provides a strategy and action plan to deliver on the commitments of the Motion. In approving the Environment Plan, Operational Services Committee resolved that Finance and Assets Committee consider how the actions outlined in the Plan be suitably resourced.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 That the Committee:

- (A) Notes and welcomes the recent adoption of the Council's first Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (June 2020);
- (B) Supports all efforts to embed a strong 'think climate, think environment' culture in all the Council's activities and decision making; and
- (C) Approves the creation of a new annual budget to deliver on the Actions set out in the Plan, to the sum of £100,000 per annum.(reviewable each year, as part of the normal budget setting process), with such spend in 2020/21 to be broadly in line with the proposed spend set out in this Report. The finance to support the strategy will come from an annual in-year draw from the Surplus Savings Reserve.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 On 16 October 2019, Full Council approved a wide-ranging Motion relating to climate change matters including the need to boost our local natural environment and declared a climate change emergency.

3.2 The Motion agreed a number of specific actions which should take place, including a commitment to the preparation of an Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan ('Environment Plan'). That Environment Plan was subsequently adopted by the Operational Services Committee on 8 June 2020, and published on the Council's website shortly thereafter:

<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/agendas/5%20-%20080620%20V12%20ApA.pdf>

3.3 Whilst the Committee has responsibility for overseeing progress on the delivery of the Environment Plan it recognised that resources are necessary in order to make it a success and deliver the 20 actions/commitments, and hence asked Finance and Assets Committee to consider this point.

3.4 This report is intended to meet that request.

Summary of Actions Proposed and Resources Required

3.5 Attached as an appendix is a summary table setting out the top 20 'actions/commitments' for 2020/21, together with progress on each, a timeline and the resources needed.

3.6 In many instances, the resources required are already committed, or can be achieved through redirecting existing resource.

3.7 However, three broad themes arise in terms of some additional resource requirements.

3.8 First, some of the actions require expertise beyond what we have available within the Council. £20,000 is considered by officers necessary to be set aside for this package of works, to be likely spent as follows:

- To achieve actions 7 and 8, we need to commission a property surveyor skilled at teasing out what additional energy efficiency savings or renewable energy opportunities are possible at The Grange and ESpace North - £6,000.
- Action 11 (meadow and tree planting) requires expertise to establish sound sites to progress and advise what should be planted - £5,000
- Action 14 (district Environment Plan) is likely to require some external auditing to ensure robustness - £5,000
- Contingency – for additional expert support for delivering all of the actions/commitments - £4,000

3.9 Second, whilst some skills to achieve some of the actions already exist 'in house', for some of the commitments the task required is too significant to be able to 'add on' to an existing officer's workload, without their substantive work and service to the customer suffering. As such, it is recommended that some of the additional expenditure (approx. £45,000) is used to secure additional officer support to undertake some of the tasks and coordinate all the activity. Example tasks are Actions 5, 14, 15, 16 and 19. The most efficient way of doing this is through an extension to the existing SLA arrangement with Peterborough City Council (PCC), which presently covers 'strategic planning' but could be expanded to cover coordination and delivery of the Environment Plan, plus delivery of some of the commitments themselves. PCC already has this staffing expertise, and were

utilised temporarily to help prepare the Environment Plan over winter/spring. In principle, agreement has been reached with PCC in line with above, subject to the outcome of this agenda item. As a reminder, the SLA is, in effect, a sharing of staff between the two authorities, with PCC charging ECDC on a cost-recovery day rate basis, up to an agreed cap.

3.10 The third area of spend is delivering some of the projects 'on the ground', over 2020/21, enabling visible or real evidence of progress to be seen. Again, existing (or redirecting existing) resource will be utilised for this purpose, but officers recommend an additional sum of £30,000 be created for this purpose. This will be likely targeted at delivering:

- Action 1 (energy supply and offsetting) - £1,500
- Action 4 (EV charging points) (depending on outcome and timing of research) - £not known, and might be 2021/22
- Action 7 and 8 (energy efficiency measures at Grange/E-Space N) – set aside £20,000 (spend depends on outcome of survey)
- Action 11 (tree and meadow planting) - £5,000 for purchasing and planting
- Contingency, for spend on delivering on other actions/commitments (for example, new water bottle refilling stations in public places) - £3,500

3.11 In addition to above, the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) for Cambridgeshire, has ambitious plans for the county, including an overarching aim of 'doubling land for nature'. ECDC is a partner of the LNP, and signed up to such an ambition last year. The LNP is also undergoing a transformational process, and is likely to become a charitable interest organisation, with a more robust governance process. This is necessary in order to deliver on its ambitions. However, presently, the LNP has no meaningful funds available to it, and no staff. It is entirely run by volunteers from a wide variety of organisations. In order to put it on a firmer footing and enable it to campaign and influence more widely, and bid for funds from a variety of sources, it is seeking a £5,000 annual contribution from all member organisations. It is recommended ECDC makes such a contribution, and continues to influence the direction of the LNPs vision and projects.

3.12 All of the above requires an investment of approx. £100,000. Following engagement across service leads, it is confirmed that existing budgets do not presently cover this amount. Of course, the net cost may be lower – we may not need all that spend and some of the actions should result in financial saving (such as less business miles; less fuel use; more conscious decision making by officers to 'think climate, think environment' and use resources more efficiently by cutting out waste). Financial savings and carbon savings are often aligned. Also, the figures quoted for specific actions should be regarded as indicative rather than fixed or precise, an actual spend on individual actions may be flexed accordingly, within the £100,000 ceiling.

3.13 Whilst the funding required for this year (2020/21) is relatively clear, as set out above, what is less clear is the precise funding requirements for subsequent years. However, it is certain that funding will be required in future years, for projects as set by Operational Services Committee in its annual early summer Environment Plan review. It is therefore proposed that the £100,000 request is a recurring annual request, albeit one which is regularly monitored each year for its effectiveness.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Council has already approved its Environment Plan. Many of its actions can be delivered without additional resource. However, some cannot. Accordingly, £100,000 is recommended to deliver on all the actions.

4.2 Without the funding, officers will still progress some of the actions but will likely postpone a number of them to future years.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 As set out in the report, there is a £100,000 revenue financial implication arising from the recommendations, on an annual recurring basis. Making decisions on individual projects will, where appropriate, require their own further individual decision, including consideration of financial implications.

5.2 There is no existing budget for the Environment & Climate Change Strategy. Therefore the money will need to come from an in-year draw from the Surplus Savings Reserve.

5.2 Equality Impact Assessment has found no direct positive or negative impacts.

5.3 An Environmental Impact Assessment has found no direct benefits arising from approving the recommendations, but the individual projects which will proceed as a consequence of the funding will, it is forecast, have significant direct or indirect benefits.

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A: Summary Table of Actions, Resources and Timetable

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
	Room 12, The Grange, Ely	Richard Kay Strategic Planning Manager (01353) 616458 E-mail: richard.kay@eastcambes.gov.uk

Appendix A – summary of actions and progress (table up to date as at 30.6.20, but remains a ‘live’ document)

	20 Commitments for 2020/21:	Lead Officer	Comments	Resources / Budget	Overall Progress	Completed Dates
						Target dates
1	Review its entire electricity and gas contracts, and, where practical to do so, will seek to amend to 100% renewable electricity tariffs and 100% carbon off-set gas tariffs as soon as possible.	Spencer Clark	<p>Work underway.</p> <p>Electricity: Critical deadline of 30 June 2020 to make a decision for Oct 2020 supply.</p> <p>Gas: current contract does not have a tariff option for offsetting gas emissions. Alternative offsetting to be explored. Preliminary options below:</p> <p>CUPSE, LNP and partners exploring potential of setting up a local carbon offset fund and delivery programme.</p> <p>National and international offset mechanism already exist.</p>	<p>100% renewable elec is 0.075pkwh ‘premium’. Total est annual premium cost = aprox £500.</p> <p>Contract does not allow a gas offset option, so alternative offset options needs exploring, and cost/vfm determined. Estimated at £1,000.</p>	Underway	<p>18/6/20– Green tariff for electricity confirmed, for 1 Oct 2020 start.</p> <p>25/6/20 - preliminary meeting with CUPSE.</p> <p>Autumn – options for offsetting gas put to Ctte</p>
2	Appraise the impact of its streetlights and consider the options	Spencer Clark	Existing database of street lights exists, and	Likely an ‘invest to save’ option i.e.	Not started	30/9/20 - establish up to

	to move to LED lighting, if feasible, taking account of the carbon savings, financial savings and public opinion of doing so, including consideration as whether dimming of lights is practicable and safe during certain low-use hours (note: most street lights are not under the control of ECDC).		only in need of check to bring up to date. Some lights already use LEDs.	upfront capital, future revenue saving. Costs / savings unknown, but likely very limited in 2020/21, and from existing resources.		date database of ECDC owned lighting, and degree of LEDs already in place. 30/9/20 - establish lessons learnt from PCC/CCC 31/12/20 - establish options, with costings 31/3/21 - determine whether / how to proceed
3	Embed a greater culture of home working (to reduce commuting) and less business travel (eg for site visits), taking advantage of lessons learnt during the Covid-19 lockdown, with the aim of encouraging staff to undertake less, and more coordinated, site visits and meeting attendance.	HR/ CMT	Chief Executive-led survey of service leads undertaken in early June, to help establish lessons learnt from COVID working practice.	Likely nil or limited additional costs, above what has already been spent for COVID. Potential to save revenue costs (business mileage claims). Overall, cost neutral.	Not started (other than for COVID)	Summer 2020 – evaluation of benefits arising from COVID enforced working practice Autumn – to coincide with greater return to office work, ensure this action is taken forward
4	Undertake a thorough appraisal of the potential to expand electric car charge points.	Sally Bonnett	CP Combined Authority (CA) undertaking research on this, which we should feed into and get results from.	Nil, other than staff time for the appraisal. Will need funding for implementation.		CA research underway TBC – CA report finalised TBC – options for progressing in ECDC
5	Roll out further guidance and training for staff in relation to the recently introduced ‘Carbon Impact Assessment’ procedure – a new assessment which requires all Council decisions to be assessed for	Richard Kay	CIA process in place, but very limited guidance. Also relies on a single point of supervision and sign off (RK)	Nil, other than additional staff time.	Not started	Late 2019 – CIA process commenced 31/8/20 - survey of service leads on CIA process to date 30/9/20 - Greater CIA

	the carbon implications of the decision being made.					guidance issued to service leads, following appraisal of CIA process to date.
6	Work with ECTC and ECSS, the Council's wholly owned companies responsible for matters such as waste collection, street cleansing and maintaining public open spaces, conclude a review into alternative options for its vehicle fleet, and set out a programme of how its vehicle fleet will become less carbon intensive, plus review our waste collection methods to determine whether more efficient route collections can be secured, thereby reducing vehicle fuel consumption (and consequently reduced CO2 emissions).	James Khan	ECSS is already committed to review options, as and when fleet needs replacing, but there is no guarantee suitable vehicles are available to cover the full range and specification of current vehicles at this time.	Capital costs will be significant to cover the additional cost of carbon neutral vehicles. Additional cost will be needed to implement sufficient charging infrastructure. But, some revenue (fuel) savings could materialise in the short term. Nil additional resource for 2020/21	Early stages	The aim is to change the waste collection vehicles, in line with the Governments Waste and Resource Strategy, to ensure vehicles are not changed unnecessarily early. Next level of consultation for the strategy is due winter 2020. Smaller vehicles, which electric versions are more widely available, are not due for replacement until 2027/28.
7	Complete an energy opportunity assessment for The Grange to identify measures that can be taken to reduce consumption and/or generate renewable energy and deliver at least one of the measures identified within a year.	Spencer Clark	Other local authorities in the local area have done similar work, which can be used as a template.	Survey cost = est £3,000 Implementation of recommendations = TBC, but establish budget of £20,000 for 2020/21, to be shared with action 8 below.	Not started	Autumn 2020 (provided ability to do so) - instruct surveyors 31/12/20 - survey results 31/3/21 - implement at least one recommendation
8	Complete an energy opportunity assessment for E-Space North to identify measures that can be taken	Spencer Clark	Other local authorities in the local area have done similar work,	Survey cost = est £3,000 Implementation of	Not started	Autumn 2020 (provided ability to do so) - instruct surveyors

	to reduce consumption and/or generate renewable energy and deliver at least one of these.		which can be used as a template.	recommendations = TBC, but establish budget of £20,000 for 2020/21, to be shared with action 7 above.		31/12/20 - survey results 31/3/21 - implement at least one recommendation
9	Develop a Customer Access Strategy, which at its heart will enable customers to undertake activities with the Council without the need for physical attendance at Council Offices.	Annette Wade	COVID lessons learnt can help develop this strategy	Costs/savings unknown. Hopefully net neutral cost, with some upfront costs (e.g. website /online capability) offset by reduced 1-2-1 customer contact costs.	Not started	31/10/20 Draft Customer Access Strategy circulated to Corporate Management Team.
10	Finalise the Council's bus, cycling and walking review (which commenced over winter 2019/20), and work with a wide variety of partners to try to implement its findings, taking advantage of new Government funds, linked to Covid-19 recovery, to boost cycling and walking infrastructure.	Sally Bonnett	Public consultation ended on 31 st May, feedback is currently being analysed. The aim is to identify priority routes and seek funding to deliver these.	Likely other funds utilised rather than ECDC.	Review ongoing. Implementation thereafter.	TBC by Working Party
11	Undertake a thorough appraisal of the Council's land assets, and determine whether a programme of tree planting and/or meadow planting can take place on any of it. If so, commence that programme during the 2020/21 winter and spring planting season.		Significant public pressure on this action. Some willingness for community groups to deliver and manage sites themselves (though that has issues of safety and insurance	Commission expertise to advise on most appropriate sites and what could be planted = £5,000. Budget to implement findings = TBC, but establish budget of		30/7/20 - prepare map of land assets 30/11/20 - finalised programme of candidate sites and actions 31/3/21 - deliver of some/all sites

			etc).	£5,000 for 2020/21, and review for future years.		
12	Prepare, consult and adopt two Supplementary Planning Documents, one on the Natural Environment and the second on Climate Change.	Richard Kay	Natural Env SPD aiming for adoption in Sept (earlier is not possible due to legal restrictions relating to hard copy inspection not being possible at present). Climate change SPD not commenced – draft due at ctte in Sept	Nil, other than staff time, from existing budgets.	Part underway.	31/3/20 - Draft Nature SPD consulted upon 30/9/20 - Nature SPD to ctte for adoption 30/9/20 - Draft climate change SPD to ctte Oct/Nov - consult 31/3/21 - Climate change SPD adopted
13	Identify / develop a training course for all staff and Members on climate change issues, minimisation, mitigation, adaptive measures, and key environmental policies (possibly Open University's Environment: treading lightly on the Earth). Aim for all staff and Members to have completed training by 2021. All new starters from 2021 to complete training within 2 months of start date.	HR	OU course being trialled on a few staff at PCC – positive feedback to date. Need to nominate a HR lead for climate change / environment matters	Nil, other than staff time. (OU course is free, and takes 1-2 days to complete)	Not started	30/10/20 – training course agreed. 31/12/20 – half of staff and Members completed training. 31/3/21 – 95% of staff and Members completed training.
14	Put in place arrangements, by April 2021 (including a district wide partnership forum), to facilitate the preparation of a district wide Action Plan ('District-EnvPlan'). This Action Plan, which is prepared in partnership with a wide range of	Richard Kay		This will require 0.5fte staff resource, not presently available. In addition, may require, for robustness, external	Not started	Timetable TBC

	stakeholders, will set out how we can cut our carbon emissions and boost the natural environment collectively across the East Cambridgeshire area.			expertise to audit results (eg Carbon Trust). Assume £5,000.		
15	Work with a willing Parish Council, to prepare a template parish-based Action Plan ('Parish-EnvPlan'), and subsequently encourage all Parish Councils to come up with their own targets and projects.	Richard Kay	Burwell and Sutton PC already approached us.	Nil, apart from additional staff time of around 0.05fte	Very early stages	June 2020 – preliminary discussions with 2x PCs underway 31/3/21 - publish a template action plan for PCs to use.
16	Prepare a second Council-EnvPlan by June 2021 (ie a review of this document), setting out progress over 2020/21, and proposals and targets for 2021/22.	Richard Kay		Nil, apart from staff time. First version required 0.4fte for 3 months, plus wider staff input. Estimate similar resource, for 2 months in 2021.	Not started	30/11/20 - update energy use data for 2019/20 31/12/20 - review of all 2020/21 targets; drafting of 21/22 targets 31/1/21 - cut off for Ideas Forum 31/3/21 - reflect on recommendations arising from (17) below.
17	Work proactively with the Combined Authority, as part of its recently launched Climate Change Independent Commission		Commission launched in early June	Nil, other than staff time from existing resource.	Not started	30/11/20 - CA draft report due 28/2/21 - CA final report due
18	Support Cambridgeshire County Council in its delivery of its recently adopted Action Plan.	All	Final version adopted June 2020	Resources depends on degree we are able to assist. May require limited additional staff resource.		Ongoing
19	The Council also acknowledges that	Richard	PCC and County doing	The Plan itself should	Not started	

	in recognising there is a climate emergency, the actions needed to be taken are not all about mitigating the impacts, but also adapting to the inevitable changes of climate change. As such, the Council also commits to commence preparation of a Climate Adaptation Plan over the next 12 months.	Kay	similar work, which we can use as a template.	be nil cost other than additional staff time. In the medium term, it could lead to costs depending on actions it proposes		30/12/20 - draft Adaptation Plan 30/4/21 - final adaptation plan
20	Work with Palace Green Homes (PGH), the Council's commercial property and development company, to establish a new sustainability policy for the company; this will then inform how it can progress its development schemes in the most sustainable, yet viable, way.	Richard Kay / Rebecca Saunt (plus Phil Rose from PGH)	Most development companies have these, so templates available	Policy drafting itself should be nil, and probably from existing staff resource. Implementing what it says could have viability issues for PGH (positive or negative) in future years.	Not started.	May 2020 – preliminary conversations with PGH 31/10/20 - final sustainability policy

Appendix 2 - EQIA