

Report to Cabinet

28th November

By the Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste and Recycling



DECISION REQUIRED

Not Exempt

Horsham District Council's Carbon Footprint

Executive Summary

Horsham District Council is committed to tackling climate change and already has a good track record on addressing environmental issues which it can build on. The report provides an update on the Council's work to examine and reduce its own carbon footprint, as it moves towards becoming a carbon neutral organisation. This is only the first step for the Council as an organisation. Having established its footprint, this will be followed up with a science based target and a practical and costed action plan as to how this can be achieved. The report and action plan will follow in early 2020.

The report also proposes establishing a seed funding pot of £40,000 per annum, commencing in 2020/21 financial year, to support community groups and Parish Councils who want to implement projects that address climate change.

Recommendations

That the Cabinet is recommended:

- i) Note the details of the carbon footprint generated by the Council's buildings, transport and operations
- ii) To recommend to Council that in the budget for 2020/21 £200,000 is transferred into a green reserve to create a seed funding pot for community groups for a five year period.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) The Council's carbon footprint will form the basis of setting a science based target for reducing its carbon emissions and producing a practical, costed action plan to achieve the target
- ii) Community groups and Parish Councils would be able to apply for funding for projects that tackle climate change and contribute to a District wide approach to addressing this issue. The fund would be £40,000 per annum.

Background Papers

Council June 2019 – Notice of Motion

Wards affected: All

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Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In June 2019 the Council passed a Notice of Motion which acknowledges the need to take action to tackle climate change. This report includes high level information on the main sources of carbon dioxide (and other greenhouse gases) from Council buildings, transport and other activities. Cabinet is asked to note the Council's carbon footprint for 2018/19 which has been produced in partnership with a consultant.
- 1.2 Horsham District Council has a strong track record for implementing environmental projects. The following gives a snap shot of actions that have been implemented over the last few years:-
- A District wide recycling rate for domestic waste of 54% was achieved several months before the national target of 50% by 2020;
 - The new Piries Place car park won a national Green Apple Environmental Award due to its environmental credentials, such as including LED lighting, electric charging points and a living wall;
 - Several new Council developments have incorporated design and technology to reduce their energy use; such as an air source heat pump at the new Hop Oast depot. At The Bridge leisure centre underfloor heating, LED lighting, and a heat recovery system were installed, as well as being designed to maximise natural ventilation;
 - Projects to reduce fuel poverty have been implemented for several years. This has included a free home visiting service for families on low incomes to give advice on reducing energy and installing simple energy saving measures. Over the last six years approximately 1000 households have received these visits and on average each household has saved £250 per annum, as well as reducing their carbon emissions;
 - Council owned sites are managed to maximise biodiversity. Chesworth Farm has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site (which recognises its importance for wildlife on a county level). This joins Southwater Country Park, Leechpool and Owlbeech Woods and Warnham Nature Reserve as greenspaces with wildlife designations in the District;
 - The Council supported the establishment of Refill Horsham District. This is run by a community group known as Kinder Living which encourages businesses and other premises to allow customers to fill reusable water bottles for free, with the aim of reducing the use of single use plastic;
 - The Horsham District Planning Framework includes policies relating to a range of environment issues from incorporating sustainable transport into development to protecting historic environments and includes a whole chapter of policies relating to climate change
 - The District's carbon emissions reduced by 32% between 2005 and 2017.
- 1.3 Collating the Council's carbon footprint is the first step in a co-ordinated approach to reduce the Council's carbon emissions which will build on previous work. The carbon footprint will used as a basis for setting a target to reduce the organisation's emissions, followed by an action plan to reach the target. The Council is setting out how it will reduce its emissions as a starting point for District wide action on climate change. The latter will involve working in partnership with other organisations and the local community. The report proposes establishing a seed fund for community groups and Parish Councils to implement local projects that address climate change.

- 1.4 The actions delivered through the proposed Wilder Horsham District programme (which is subject to separate report) complements the Council's agenda on tackling climate change. For example, actions such as planting trees and improving soil condition remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (carbon is one of the main contributors to the changing climate). The natural environment also plays an important role in reducing some of the impacts of a changing climate; such as flooding.

2 Relevant Council policy

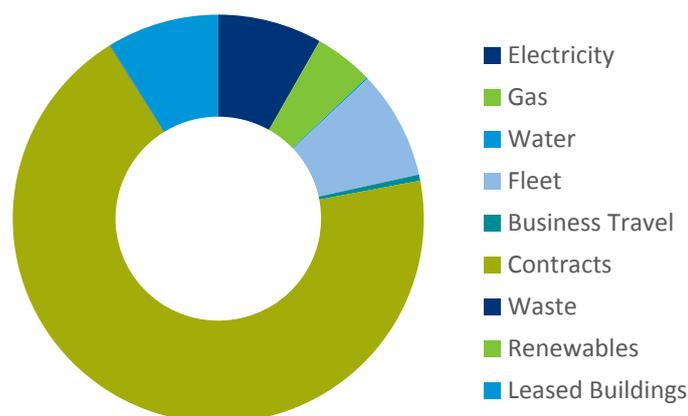
- 2.1 One of the five themes from the emerging Corporate Plan 2019-2023 is a Cared for Environment which prioritises the "***protection of our environment as we move to a low carbon future***". This includes the following activities and projects:-
- undertake a carbon audit to understand the Council's current carbon footprint
 - produce an action plan to move towards a carbon neutral organisation
 - work with partners towards becoming a carbon neutral District

3 Details

The Council's carbon footprint

- 3.1 A baseline of the Council's carbon emissions is required before targeted action can be taken to reduce these emissions. The baseline has been produced in conjunction with a consultant, the Carbon Trust. This is an independent organisation that has a long track record of working with private and public sector organisations to reduce their carbon emissions, implement resource efficient strategies and commercialise low carbon technologies. The full report is included as an appendix to the report. Data for the 2018/19 financial year was collated for the following:
- electricity and gas used in buildings operated by the Council
 - the amount and type of fuel used in the fleet vehicles and for business travel
 - the amount of waste generated from Council operations and the method of disposal e.g. landfill, recycling or composted
 - the value of contracts with suppliers (to be used as a proxy for the carbon emissions from the largest suppliers by value of contract and environmental impact)
 - The floorspace and uses of leased buildings (to estimate carbon emissions from these buildings).
- 3.3 Carbon conversion factors were used to establish the amount of carbon emitted from these sources (these used the internationally recognised Greenhouse Gas Protocol). The total footprint for 2018/19 was **18,035** tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (this converts all greenhouse gases into the carbon equivalent). This will be used as the baseline for actions to reduce the Council's carbon emissions. It is difficult to compare this total with other councils as organisations do not include the same information to establish their carbon footprint. The following is a summary of the Council's main sources of carbon emissions by category.

Emissions by Category



Pie chart showing the main sources of carbon from Council buildings, transport and operations

Source of carbon emissions	Total emissions (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)	% of total
Emissions from gas (used to heat buildings)	735	4%
Fuel (petrol/diesel used in Council fleet)	1,248	7%
Electricity (used in buildings)	1,363	8%
Electricity (used by electric vehicles)	2.0	0.01%
Council Suppliers (operating services or providing goods/services to the Council)	12,466	69%
Buildings leased by the Council	1590	9%
Business Travel	88	0.5%
Water	21	0.1%
Waste (generated from Council operations)	8	0.04%
Others (electricity transmission and distribution, "well to tank" fuel emissions; includes the extraction, refining and transport of fossil fuels)	514	3%

Table showing the main sources of carbon emissions by amount and percentage (due to rounding this exceeds 100%)

- 3.5 The largest emissions are from the contracts for providing goods and services to the Council, or operating services on behalf of the Council, and the buildings that the Council leases; these account for 78% of the total emissions. These will be the most challenging emissions to reduce as they are not within the direct control of the Council. However, understanding the contribution that these make to the Council's carbon footprint is useful so that contracts with suppliers can reflect the Council's ambition to reduce carbon emissions associated with its operations. The other significant sources

are electricity and natural gas used within buildings (12%) and the transport fleet operated by the Council (8%).

- 3.6 The largest source of emissions from gas consumption used in buildings are from the main Council offices, the Capitol theatre, and the Drill Hall, and Fiennes Court residences. These sources account for 87% of carbon emissions by using natural gas emissions. The difficulty with Parkside is that the Council leases this space which will make a reduction in total emissions in this building more complicated.
- 3.7 The top emitting sites from electricity consumption in buildings are the main Council offices, The Capitol theatre, The Forum, Park House and Swan Walk car park. These sources account for 77% of all electricity emissions.
- 3.8 In terms of the Council's fleet vehicles the majority (89%) of emissions arise from running the refuse trucks. Business travel accounts for 0.5% of the total carbon footprint. This data only includes car travel for business. The data was not readily available for business travel by public transport or for training. Systems will be put in place to collate this data for the 2020/2021 footprint.

4 Next Steps

Reducing the Council's carbon emissions

- 4.1 Based on the carbon footprint for the Council's activities, the Council will work with a consultant to develop a science based target to reduce these emissions. A science based target demonstrates the carbon emission reduction that is required to limit global warming to under 2°C (this was the international target included in the Paris Agreement). A science based target still aims to reach carbon neutrality but will be in line with what the science shows to be required to limit global increases in temperature. An action plan will then be produced, with practical and fully costed measures, on how to achieve the target.

Reducing District wide carbon emissions

- 4.2 Alongside this work the Council will commence work on setting a target for reducing district wide carbon emissions, as well as an action plan to achieve the target. This is more challenging but the Council has some levers that it can use; such as its role as the Local Planning Authority and it will also need to form partnerships with other organisations and communities that can influence the reduction of carbon emissions locally.
- 4.3 Since June 2019, the Council has been meeting various local environmental community groups. This includes Sussex Green Living, Kinder Living and the Sussex Climate Change Alliance. It is proposed to establish a seed funding pot in 2020/21 to help support small local initiatives that will contribute towards the Council's environmental aims. This will be aimed at Parish Councils and community groups. The fund would be £40,000 per annum and would be part of a green reserve that will include funding for other initiatives, such as the Wilder Horsham District programme. If the funding is approved as part of the Council's budget setting process a further report setting out how the seed fund will operate will be produced. The operation of the fund will be reviewed after 12 months to ensure that it is contributing to the delivery of the Council's environmental aims.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 Environment, Waste and Recycling Policy Development Advisory Group discussed the report. No changes to the report were suggested and the recommendations in the report were supported.
- 5.2 The Head of Legal Services was consulted on the report and did not have any substantive comments but some minor amendments were made to the content of the report.
- 5.3 The Director of Corporate Resources gave advice on the financial aspects of the report and suggested minor amendments to the report. The advice and proposed changes have been included in the report.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 The main alternative course of action was the “do nothing option”. However, given the commitments in the Notice of Motion and the importance given to climate change in the Corporate Plan this option was rejected.
- 6.2 An alternative course of action is to take actions to reduce carbon emissions across the District without establishing a seed fund. However, establishing the fund will help to engage community groups and Parish Councils with the issues associated with climate change. This will also encourage practical projects that will improve the local environment.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 There are no immediate financial implications from the information on the carbon footprint included in this report. However, once a target has been set, the related action plan will need to be fully costed. The financial implications from this have yet to be determined.
- 7.2 The annual update of the carbon footprint will be carried out by the Council, rather than a consultant. This will have staff implications. A member of Development Management has the necessary skills and capacity to undertake this work. The work to set a target and develop the action plan will be led by the Director of Community Services and Project Developer, with expertise provided by a consultant. Input to the process will be from a cross Council team of officers that has already been established. The intention is to complete this work by end of March 2020 when a further report will be presented to Cabinet.
- 7.3 Work will also commence on understanding the District wide Council carbon emissions and actions that can be taken to reduce these. The Council will need to work in partnership with other organisations, such as West Sussex County Council, Parish Councils, businesses and community groups. A report on this area of work will be presented to Cabinet in due course.
- 7.4 The report proposes establishing a seed fund for community groups of £40,000 per annum commencing in the 2020/21 financial year. The five year period for running the fund would run concurrently with a similar fund for the Wilder Horsham District programme. A green reserve will be created and will include the budget for the community seed fund.

The use of the fund will be regularly reviewed and adjustments made to the budget depending on take up by Parish Council's and community groups.

- 7.5 The details of how this fund will be operated will be subject to a further report. However, the intention is to encourage community groups and Parish Council's to take actions to tackle climate change. Once established the fund will be monitored to determine whether it is achieving its aims and the level of budget for the fund will also be reviewed annually. There will be staff implications in establishing the fund. Advice will be required from the Community Development Team on establishing and running a community fund.

8 Legal Consequences

- 8.1 The **Climate Change Act 2008** is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. It requires that emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are reduced and that climate change risks are prepared for. The Act also establishes the framework to deliver on these requirements. The Act commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050.
- 8.2 There is no direct legislative requirements for Councils to take actions to contribute to the legal target set out in the Act. However, several of the Council's responsibilities directly relate to reducing carbon emissions and adapting to changes to the climate. For example, Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) requires that a local authority's development plan must include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 states that "*the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure*".

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 Key risks arising from this project are:-
- The carbon footprint is not accurate;
 - Resources are not available to keep the data in the footprint up-to-date;
 - Community organisations do not apply to the seed fund for budget to implement projects.
- 9.2 All of these risks can be managed and do not pose a significant risk to the project. For example, the seed funding project would be regularly monitored and reviewed. If there is insufficient take up then the seed fund would be withdrawn or the budget reduced.

10 Other Considerations

- 10.1 The Council's carbon footprint is the starting point for producing a target and action plan to reduce the organisations carbon emissions. This will also link to addressing climate change across the District. This will, therefore, ultimately improve the environmental sustainability of the Council and the Horsham District. Once the seed fund is implemented this will also make a positive contribution to local action on climate change.
- 10.2 As the main recommendation in the report is for Cabinet to note the Council's carbon footprint this will not have any implications for Crime and Disorder or the Equalities Act

2010. The implementation of the seed fund for community groups will need to ensure equality of access to the fund so that the Council's obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 are complied with. There are no implications relating to crime and disorder from this aspect of the report. This report is considered to be consistent with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.