

# ***Information/Discussion Paper***

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9 September 2019**

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency – Update**

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1 The Committee has requested an update on the activity taking place in response to the Climate Emergency motion debated by Council in February and formally declared by Cabinet in July.

#### **2. Summary of activity**

- 2.1 A staff working group has been established and the first meeting, a brainstorming session, was held in July. Work is now underway to develop an action plan from the ideas, which will complement the outcomes of the report being prepared for Council in October.
- 2.2 The second strand of activity has been the preparation of the report for Council, which will:
- establish a carbon emissions baseline for the Council and the borough;
  - set out a roadmap for making progress towards making the Council and Cheltenham carbon neutral by 2030, and
  - identify the resources needed to deliver the activities
- 2.3 The range of expertise and skills required to prepare this report was not available in-house and so consultants De Courcy Alexander (DCA) were brought in to support the council with this.
- 2.4 The work has primarily been undertaken by [Simon Graham](#), Head of Innovation at DCA. Simon knows Cheltenham extremely well, having previously worked for a number of years at local company Commercial Ltd, driving the implementation of a very successful sustainability programme and achieving a number of 'firsts' for the company, one of which was first in the sector to be Carbon Neutral and Zero Waste. In 2013 the company was recognised at the [Guardian Sustainable Business Awards](#), winning the category for innovation in engaging employees with the company's sustainability journey.
- 2.5 The focus of the work in August has been on gathering evidence, information and ideas to inform the report. This has included:
- (i) Meeting and interviewing:
    - a range of officers from across the council
    - key members
    - a number of external organisations including GCHQ, SuperDry and the LEP
    - key partners including the Cheltenham Trust, Ubico, emergency services and GCC
  - (ii) Facilitating a members' brainstorming session
  - (iii) Attending the public assembly held on 6 August as an observer
  - (iv) An examination of the council's key strategies and plans

(v) Data collection for the emissions baselines

### 3. Initial findings and thoughts

- 3.1 The scale of the challenge should not be underestimated, however Cheltenham is well placed to demonstrate leadership in responding to the climate emergency and this aligns well with the vision for the future of Cheltenham.
- 3.2 There is a wealth of activity already underway within the council and in the wider community on the climate change agenda, but much of it simply isn't known about.
- 3.3 There is a genuine, widespread commitment to tackling the climate emergency and many thoughts and ideas about how this can be achieved, which need to be prioritised.
- 3.4 Significant investment will be required to deliver the commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030, but it is achievable. It is important such investment is not viewed in isolation as many of the solutions for the climate emergency will deliver positive benefits in other areas, such as alleviating poverty, adding social value, benefiting the economy and promoting community cohesion and resilience.

### 4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The report is currently in development and the committee's thoughts would be welcome on a number of potential concepts:
- (i) The idea of developing:
    - *A 'Cheltenham Standard'*  
Creating an identity that shows that activities etc in Cheltenham are of necessity of a higher standard with lower carbon impact, aligning with the Cheltenham marketing strategy.
    - *A Cheltenham Green Deal*  
Creating an investment fund that can be used within Cheltenham to achieve the carbon target through individual, community or collaborative action. For example, providing low income households with a low cost loan to update their home to become lower carbon, with repayments coming from their reduced energy costs.
    - *Cheltenham Energy*  
Cheltenham already has over 20MW of installed renewable capacity. Cheltenham Energy could be an entity that enables the Council, businesses and residents to purchase zero carbon energy, primarily from local sources.
  - (ii) Prioritising new build or retrofit
  - (iii) Setting a 5 year interim target of 50% or 75%
- 4.2 Data analysis is also underway to establish the emissions baselines for the council and the borough.
- 4.3 The final report, which will include recommendations and an assessment of resources required, will be presented to Council on 14 October before being considered, together with Council's feedback, by Cabinet on 5 November.

**Contact Officer**

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**Accountability**

Councillor Hegenbarth, Cabinet Member  
Corporate Services  
Councillor Coleman, Cabinet Member Clean and  
Green Environment