

Item No. 21.	Classification: Open	Date: 20 October 2020	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Second Environment Scrutiny Commission report on the Climate Emergency Strategy	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Johnson Situ, Climate Emergency, Planning and Transport	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR JOHNSON SITU, CLIMATE EMERGENCY, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Climate change is the greatest threat to society. Its effects can be seen across the world from the melting of the polar ice caps, to the devastating forest fires in Australia, to the floods that have ravaged communities here in the UK and the air pollution that impacts thousands every year including here in Southwark.

Tackling the climate emergency requires international co-operation, but it is also dependent on radical local action. Southwark Council has already acted to reduce our carbon footprint and air pollution, but we know we need to do more to address this challenge.

With our refreshed Council Plan, we are putting the environment at the heart of everything we do as a council. We are improving energy efficiency in our council homes, planting thousands more new trees, and promoting walking, cycling and public transport over private car use.

The climate emergency has been brought into sharper focus during the coronavirus pandemic. It has demonstrated the need for places and communities to become more resilient. It has also highlighted the major impact human activity has on the air quality and carbon emissions. There is now a window of opportunity to ensure our recovery from this pandemic is rooted in addressing these immense environmental challenges, one that is matched by our commitment to reduce inequalities. Southwark's climate conference is an essential part of building that vision and acting as one borough together.

This report details the Cabinet's response to the Environment Scrutiny's review of the Climate Emergency Strategy. I welcome the review's findings and this report commits to including our response in final version of the Climate Strategy. I would like to put on record my thanks to the Environment Scrutiny Commission and the community experts that supported them to develop an important review on Southwark's journey to be Net Zero by 2030.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Cabinet

1. That cabinet notes the recommendations made by the environment scrutiny commission and agrees the response set out in this report.
2. That officers act upon the response agreed by cabinet as part of the corporate strategy on tackling the Climate Emergency.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The global challenge from climate change is unprecedented and urgent action is required now to tackle it. In March 2019, the council declared a climate emergency which recognised the scale and scope of the crisis and committed the council to doing all that it can to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030.
4. In July 2019 the council hosted a climate summit in response to the declaration. Officers were asked to develop a climate change strategy. In October 2019, Cabinet agreed the report “Delivering a Climate Strategy for Southwark” which agreed a timetable to develop and deliver a climate strategy for Southwark.
5. Following the summit, the council’s environment scrutiny commission invited the cabinet member with officers to present evidence on the draft road map as well as taking evidence from other witnesses. The commission made a series of recommendations to cabinet which were received by Cabinet in October 2019. Cabinet reported back on the commission’s recommendations in February 2020.
6. In July 2020, Southwark Council published its draft climate change strategy at full Cabinet. It was agreed that the draft strategy be consulted on and that officers consider the consultation response before bringing a final climate strategy to cabinet for approval. Officers were also asked to develop a climate action plan which will set out the timescales, methods and resources for implementing a final climate change strategy.
7. In response to this draft strategy, the Environment Scrutiny Commission produced a second report with recommendations on the focus, principles, themes, engagement process and data put forward in the draft July document. This paper is a response to these recommendations.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. The draft climate change strategy is currently going through a full engagement programme and consultation which started in March 2020. The initial phase of online engagement ran from March to July which fed into the draft strategy that came to cabinet in July. This initial phase of engagement was not sufficient to deliver a final strategy due to the impact

that COVID-19 had on our ability to have in depth conversations with residents. Since the draft strategy has been published, we have continued to ask residents for their views which will feed into a final strategy that we will look to publish by the end of the year. As lockdown regulations have been eased, we have been able to run socially distanced consultation events in public spaces to gather these views directly.

9. The commission continues to play a supportive and proactive role in shaping the strategy. The commission report that came to July Cabinet is set into nine clear areas of focus, with 16 recommendations split across these nine themes. The commission's report emphasises the need to recognise that our climate is fundamentally interconnected and we need to act collectively in order to tackle the climate emergency. They also emphasise that the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that a swift and wide-reaching response to a global crisis is possible.
10. This report is intended to respond to the recommendations of the commission and indicate how the council plans to take these forward. These recommendations will form part of the ongoing consultation on the draft strategy and where applicable, officers will work to embed them into the final strategy.
11. This report is a response to this set of recommendations put forward by the commission, but we hope that the commission continues to play an active part in the process going forward as the final strategy is delivered.

Policy implications

12. The commission made 16 recommendations which are set out below along with corresponding actions.

Recommendation 1

13. The Climate Emergency is reframed to include the wider Ecological Emergency, with a commitment to work towards staying within safe Planetary Boundaries, and this shift is tested in the engagement process.

Proposed response

- a. The draft strategy recognises that ecological protection is a crucial element of fighting climate change and already includes numerous ecological aspects and commitments to biodiversity. These include but are not limited to providing free biodiversity protection and maintenance training, supporting community rewilding and removing pesticide use.
- b. We therefore feel that the strategy does not need to be reframed. Our council commitment is to tackling a climate emergency and it is important that this strategy directly reflects this commitment. It is also important that we reflect that ecological protection is a part of our

wider climate emergency rather than a separate issue. We are consulting on all aspects of the strategy and ecological protection will be a key part of this.

Recommendation 2

14. Include a strand in the strategy for Restoration, which includes increasing carbon absorption and improving the biosphere and link to present biodiversity plans.

Proposed response

- a. We agree that restoration is a vital element of redressing carbon emissions and we will need to engage with it as part of our commitment to carbon neutrality. We must be willing to adapt planning policy to focus on restoration rather than redevelopment where possible. We will consider this recommendation as part of the consultation on the draft strategy.

Recommendation 3

15. Alongside this develop an action plan and work with other London councils and with Government to seek to secure the policies, funding and powers we need to restore nature nationally and, locally to stop wildlife habitats from being destroyed, managing land in a sustainable way that is sympathetic to wildlife and creating and caring for wildlife-rich spaces in every part of the city.

Proposed response

- a. We agree with the recommendation that our own commitments on wildlife and habitats should sit alongside commitments from national government and other bodies. To have a cohesive and effective approach to the biodiversity crisis, we must work together at all levels of policy and action.
- b. In our draft strategy, we have included actions that need to happen on a national, London and individual level to protect and restore wildlife and habitats in Southwark alongside our own. Our priorities are our local conditions and opportunities and we will proactively work with other councils and national government to ensure the borough is able to protect habitats and wildlife as much as possible.
- c. We will also be heavily building on the work of the Southwark Nature Action Plan (SNAP) published this year. The SNAP sets out a vision for the continued protection, conservation and enhancement of nature in the borough and recognises that urgent action needs to be taken to respond to the decline of species and habitats.
- d. There are many areas where we can act now without additional

resources or policy changes from external bodies and we are keen to hold ourselves to account in the first instance.

Recommendation 4

16. The final consultation on the draft strategy must overlay information on emissions and deprivation to enable people to make informed responses to the strategy and the collective work of reducing emissions, underpinned by the commitment to an inclusive, fair and Just Transition.

Proposed response

- a. We agree with this recommendation that any transition away from carbon emission must be just, inclusive and fair. In our engagement work we have actively sought to engage with residents from deprived communities to ensure that those often most impacted by the fallout of climate change are properly represented. We are firmly committed to a just transition so will look into how best to use deprivation data to deliver this as part of our action plan.

Recommendation 5

17. Map both emissions and consumption data.

Map deprivation data and overlay this with emissions data to generate and prioritise the most effective actions that enable an inclusive, fair and Just Transition.

Investigate digital twin AI technology.

Proposed response

- a. We support this recommendation and will explore mapping emission and consumption data to generate and prioritise an approach that enables a just transition. We will also investigate living digital simulation models as a tool to identifying local policy responses as part of our action plan.

Recommendation 6

18. Engage with the Youth Council, youth environment groups, and other young people to set up an environment Youth Council.

Engage with Eco Councillors in schools (primary schools are working remotely with more and more children attending).

Early action to engage with communities that might not easily be able to engage digitally or where the climate change agenda has not featured people's views equally, including BAME, older and disabled people.

Proposed response

- a. We agree with the recommendation that proactive engagement with young people and those that work with young people is a necessary part of the consultation on the draft strategy. We will actively seek to engage with the youth council and youth environment groups on our draft strategy and look to set up an environment youth council that will feed into our work on the climate long term. We have already met with our Young Advisors to discuss how best to engage with young people long term on the climate, and will be working closely with colleagues on the youth review.
- b. We are keen however, that youth engagement on the climate emergency is owned and led by young people themselves where possible. The discussions and findings coming out of youth groups on this topic should be free from significant interference or involvement by the council, to ensure that they are organic and meaningful.
- c. Our ability to engage with groups who are less digitally engaged has been significantly impacted by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our priority has been engaging with residents in a safe and socially distanced way, which has meant we have been required to frequently use online resources. We will however continue to engage with those unable to access digital service social distancing permitting.
- d. Unfortunately COVID-19 is still a significant influence on the way we engage with our residents. However, we have already produced some socially distanced events in parks and will continue to look at safe and engaging ways to reach out to those who are not digitally engaged.

Recommendation 7

19. Engage with the local BIDS as part of the consultation strategy

Proposed response

- a. We agree with the recommendation and will look to engage with the local BIDS and the wider business community as part of the consultation on the draft strategy.

Recommendation 8

20. Adopt a local target to halve petrol and diesel road journeys by 2025, and by 90% by 2030, and encourage London Councils and the Mayor to do likewise.

Develop an operational plan with partners to implement this focusing on structural changes, informed by the ambitions of the Movement Plan and its associated deprivation data.

Proposed response

- a. This recommendation provides an ambitious target that would benefit our wider commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030. We will need to run viability tests on this target, but will look to implement it as part of our strategy if possible.
- b. It is worth noting that our current movement plan already presents a range of ambitious options that would lead to a significant drop in petrol and diesel road journeys by 2025, including Southwark cycle spine, a walking network and borough wide parking controls. London Councils have also set a target of halving road journeys made by petrol and diesel vehicles between 2020 and 2030.
- c. The draft strategy also includes a range of policies that would lead to a significant decrease in petrol and diesel vehicle journeys, including implementing a diesel surcharge of 50%, creating 'diesel free zones' and introducing a car parking levy on work placed car parking

Recommendation 9

21. The Commission is aware of the significance of the New Southwark Plan in relation to the delivery of Southwark's overall climate goals. The Commission is keen to ensure that Southwark delivers on its ambitions for both zero/low carbon growth and improvements to biodiversity.

Proposed response

- a. Planning officers are currently undertaking a review of the energy policies as well as the environmental, waste, transport and open space policies. Planning officers are currently preparing a review of the Carbon Price and the Carbon Offset Fund. This financial contribution is made when development is not net zero. The management of the fund will offset the carbon emissions generated onsite by the development not being net zero. This report and a draft of the reviewed Energy policy for the NSP and Climate Emergency Policy for the OKRAAP will be taken to December cabinet.

Recommendation 10

22. A focus on reducing carbon emissions onsite, by requiring a minimum of 40% on 2013 Building Regulations Part L and zero carbon (100%) for non-residential developments. The review of Policy P69 Energy in the NSP is currently being reviewed and subject to viability testing, we are looking to increasing onsite carbon reduction. This policy will go to December cabinet. We are currently taking a policy to examination which includes meeting the 2050 target for net zero carbon. We are currently reviewing a policy to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

Proposed response

- a. Planning officers are currently preparing a review of the Carbon Price and the Carbon Offset Fund. This financial contribution is made when development is not net zero. The management of the fund will offset the carbon emissions generated onsite by the development not being net zero. This report and a draft of the reviewed Energy policy for the NSP and Climate Emergency Policy for the OKRAAP will be taken to December cabinet.

Recommendation 11

23. Reduce embodied carbon and conserve resources in construction, by utilising the work of the London Waste and Recycling Board work on the Circular Economy and the Net Zero Carbon Buildings: A Framework Definition.

Proposed response

- a. Planning officers are reviewing the Energy policy in the New Southwark Plan to include emerging work on the management of waste and the Circular economy, as well as Net Zero Carbon development. Planning officers will review these documents during the policy review process.

Recommendation 12

24. Include a policy on investment of Carbon Offsets in the Climate Emergency strategy, which is subject to consultation.

Proposed response

- a. The work being done on carbon offsets is happening separately and proposals will be brought forward in the autumn.

Recommendation 13

25. Ensure the price of Carbon Offsets can save a tonne of carbon (e.g. at least £90 per tonne and consider £120 per tonne).

Proposed response

- a. We are already working on this. The current carbon price will rise from £60 to £95 per tonne once the New London Plan is adopted. In the meantime we are undertaking work to prepare an updated Southwark cost of carbon which will consider a number of increased pricing options that will start from £95 per tonne. All options will be tested for viability. The preferred option will need cabinet approval and subsequent adoption through an SPD.

Recommendation 14

26. Support community schools to adopt community energy, as a first stage in rolling out Community Energy.

Proposed response

- a. The draft strategy makes reference to community energy as a potentially viable solution to inefficient energy programmes in the borough, namely investigating the creation of a community municipal investment bond for renewable energy. We will look at the roles community schools can play in adopting community energy as part of this approach.
- b. More research and viability testing needs to be done in this area before we can commit to rolling out Community Energy across the borough. However we will work to propose community energy as a method to tackle inefficient energy use as findings emerge.

Recommendation 15

27. Invest a proportion of our Carbon Offset funds into Community Energy, subject to consultation in the Climate Emergency strategy.

Proposed response

- a. As our policy on carbon offsetting and the cost of carbon is still being developed we cannot commit to investing a proportion of the fund into community energy at this stage.

Recommendation 16

28. Set out a plan for mapping and identifying viable PV sites in Southwark, starting with community schools

Proposed response

- a. We will set out an action plan in the new year that includes work on all aspects of reducing carbon emissions. We will prioritise work that has the greatest saving. Using PV (such as solar panels) is one of the options that will be considered but not the only one. Therefore we cannot commit to the above recommendation at this point in time.

Community impact statement

29. The council is committed to exploring all available opportunities for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030. As set out in the report above, the council wants to engage with the widest range of residents including potentially through citizens juries. As also set out in the report, the council

will take steps to reach harder to reach or potentially under represented groups.

30. The council is committed to the values of a fairer future for all, and as detailed in this report is also committed to narrowing social inequality and injustice. This will shape both consultation and subsequent policies.

Resource implications

31. Recommendations supported in this paper will be taken into account as part of the ongoing consultation on the draft strategy. There are therefore no further resource implications from this paper.

Legal implications

32. There are no significant legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Financial implications

33. There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of this report.

Consultation

34. This report recommends that the views of the commission and the response from cabinet in this report form part of the ongoing consultation on the climate strategy.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

35. The report recommends that cabinet notes the recommendations made by the environment scrutiny commission and agrees a number of actions to be taken account of in the ongoing consultation on the climate strategy
36. There are no significant legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report but the director of law and democracy and her staff will provide advice to officers on any legal and governance issues arising during development of the strategy. The cabinet will need to ensure that the public sector equality duty is taken into account in developing and finalising this policy i.e. to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and others.
37. This report is being considered by the cabinet in accordance with the cabinet rules in the constitution.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

38. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that there are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.
39. Any cost implications for future years will need to be incorporated within the council's annual budget setting process.
40. Staffing and any other costs connected with this report to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Second Environment Scrutiny Commission report on the Climate Emergency Strategy	Constitutional Team, Southwark Council	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s89800/Appendix%20A%20Second%20Environment%20Scrutiny%20Commission%20report%20on%20the%20Climate%20Emergency%20Strategy.pdf		
Tackling the Climate Emergency Together – Southwark's Strategy to become Carbon Neutral by 2030	Constitutional Team, Southwark Council	Everton Robert 020 7525 7221
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s89802/Appendix%201%20Climate%20strategy.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None.	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Johnson Situ, Climate Emergency, Planning and Transport		
Lead Officer	Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director for Environment and Leisure		
Report Author	Tom Taylor, Policy and Research Officer		
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CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy		Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance		Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member		Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			9 October 2020