

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: January 2021	Meeting Name: Environment Scrutiny Commission
Report title:		Climate Emergency Update	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Cllr Johnson Situ – Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Planning and Transport	

Background

1. The council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and committed to doing everything it can to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030. In March 2020, the Cabinet Member updated the Commission on the work that the council was doing. The Commission has also conducted its own scrutiny of our climate change response to which Cabinet has responded.
2. The council published a draft strategy in June 2020. The Covid pandemic had affected our ability to engage in the way we had intended ahead of publication, and so the council has, since June, been engaging with residents about climate change. The formal consultation on the draft strategy closed on 15th January 2021 and work is now underway to make changes to the draft and publish a full strategy and action plan.
3. This paper updates the Commission on the work that has taken place since the last update in March 2020, and sets out the priorities for the coming year.

Draft Strategy and Public Engagement

4. When we last updated the Commission, we intended to deliver a programme of public engagement to inform the development of a new strategy. The Covid pandemic meant that we have had to modify our approach over the last year. The strategy was published in draft form in June 2020 and since then we have been conducting comprehensive public engagement. This included:
 - Online engagement hub
 - Community workshops
 - Young advisers session
 - Climate change conference
 - Formal consultation
 - Engagement with businesses
 - Pop-up events in Southwark parks
 - Interactive lampposts
5. We have also met with our partnership steering group who have given comprehensive feedback to the draft strategy. The consultation formally closed

on 15th January 2021. Officers are now working through the responses to inform the strategy and also the development of a comprehensive action plan to sit alongside the strategy.

6. Officers will use carbon reduction specialists to work with the council to develop the action plan. This will set out the range of programmes that need to be delivered to deliver the strategy. We plan to publish this alongside the final strategy in the coming months.

Reducing our carbon

7. Alongside our strategy development, the council has already undertaken some of the work that was identified in the strategy. Most recently we have:
 - Moved to 100% renewable electricity for all council operations. When the contract for electricity in the communal areas of our housing estates comes up for renewal next year, we will also move this over to renewable. We will be writing to schools later in the year to inform those who buy their electricity through our contract will be offering renewable by default.
 - 10,000 trees – we have launched a programme to plant 10,000 trees across the borough by next year. This is one of the biggest tree planting programmes in London. This is in addition to over 82,000 trees for which the council is already responsible.
 - Increasing the cost of carbon offset to £95 per tonne. Encouraging developers to build greener developments and funding carbon reduction programmes.
 - Parklets – as well as big changes, we are making smaller changes that respond to what our residents are telling us. Following the borough conference we opened a mini parklet, closing off a street in Walworth to traffic and using planters and street furniture to make it a greener place for people to enjoy.
8. In addition to these recent changes, the council has also delivered a number of policies since declaring a climate emergency.
 - Set up a carbon offset fund through s106 agreements;
 - Require higher than national energy efficiency standards for privately built new homes;
 - Introduce measures to encourage walking and cycling;
 - Enable the rapid shift to electric vehicles through putting in place EV charging;
 - Reduce the need to own and use a car through managing developments in the local plan;
 - Upgrade the insulation and heating systems of council buildings;
 - Switch street lighting to well designed and well directed LED lighting;
 - Cut the council's paper waste by offering papers electronically.

9. Other work is underway including:

- Work is underway between Southwark and Veolia to expand the SELCHP district heat network, moving from gas fired boilers to waste heat. This could initially realise CO2 savings of around 9,000 tonnes per year. Officers are looking at further expansion beyond this, to include the Old Kent Road regeneration area which would offer even greater CO2 savings.
- The council is working in partnership with Lewisham for our residents to receive home visits and advice on how they can reduce energy bills and save carbon, helping to alleviate fuel poverty in the Borough.
- Work is underway to fit out the council offices in Tooley Street to convert all lighting to LED. This will save around 572 tonnes of CO2 per year.

10. As well as sustainable energy measures, the council has also undertaken a review of work across every part of the council. This has considered existing initiatives as well as possible future initiatives.

Next steps

11. As we move from strategy development into delivery our priorities for the coming year are:

- Carbon baselining and report – officers are investigating how to best measure the carbon impact of the decisions that are made and how to effectively report them. We are committed to transparency including annual reporting on carbon impact.
- Action Plan – officers are reviewing the strategy in light of the consultation feedback. They are also developing an action plan. This plan will set out the additional actions the council will be taking and details of the work that is needed to deliver the strategy including timescales and milestones. Officers are in the process of obtaining expert advice from outside the council to support this work to ensure the action plan is robust.
- Citizen involvement - we are developing plans for long-term resident involvement in the process. Officers are currently looking at citizen juries and other models to ensure that as the work progresses, there is a strong link and accountability to our residents.
- Expert panel – we are setting up an expert panel to advise the council and provide expert opinion on the work we are doing and what more we could do. We have invited around a dozen experts to join the panel, and expect to announce the final membership shortly.

- Under represented groups – our aim is to be as inclusive as possible, to learn from the rich diversity of the borough, but we have not been successful in engaging some groups as well as we would like. Over the coming year, we will be focusing on how we engage with groups that are currently under-represented including particularly our BAME communities, young people and residents living in social housing.
- Behaviour Change – we will be developing a communications plan to drive behaviours change and empower residents and business to make change in their lives.
- Partnership – we will only achieve our objective if we work in partnership with others. We are engaging with anchor institutions in the borough to identify areas where we can work together to deliver our objectives including for example, how students at our universities can help shape and deliver climate change work.
- Talk and Do space – similar to those used in regeneration, these would be physical spaces to inspire and for people to learn about climate change and the changes they can make.

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