

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 8 March 2022	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Response to the report of the overview and scrutiny committee - Southwark's climate strategy and action plan	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Helen Dennis, Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR HELEN DENNIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The development of Southwark's Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan has been absolutely critical to shaping our work to deliver against our ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 and our Climate Emergency declaration. Over the last year, we have not only published our Strategy & Action Plan, but we have also agreed a constitutional change to consider the climate change implications of all our decisions as a council, and we have launched our Climate Change Citizens' Jury to help us further develop our plans. As a council, we are convinced that we must play our role in reducing carbon emissions, and have prioritised this agenda accordingly.

It is not without complexity, given constant changes in technology and in the funding environment. Therefore, the approach that we have taken to set an ambitious 2030 target, and to sketch out pathways for its achievement with listed priority actions, is I believe the right one. And I am delighted that our plan has been welcomed by Climate Emergency UK, and assessed as being the second best in London to date. Much of the information requested by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, is already being pulled together for the annual report and update of the action plan, which is due in July. The timing of this review has been deliberately chosen in order to synchronise with a new Borough Plan, and to incorporate recommendations from our Citizens' Jury. This is the best use of our council resources and will enable us to gather the data, and include analysis which has been requested by OSC. In the meantime, our focus is on continued delivery of emissions reductions across the borough, delivering on the SMART targets which are already set out in our existing Borough Plan – such as doubling cycle storage and planting 10,000 trees – and completing alterations to our operational estate, including libraries and youth centres, that move us away from gas and onto renewable sources of power.

Work around alignment with other council policies and on training, are already underway. Among other things, this year will see commencement of the early climate review of the Southwark Plan, further work on social value which underpins our Fairer Future Procurement Framework, and consultation on both

our Air Quality Action Plan, and Movement Plan to align with our climate objectives. I look forward to further discussions with OSC as we deliver on our incredibly ambitious climate agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet welcomes the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (paragraph 6) and agrees the response set out in this report.
2. Cabinet agrees to update the climate action plan in line with these recommendations when it is published in July 2022.
3. Cabinet agrees to ensure any major policy changes in the future are aligned, wherever possible, with the council's climate change strategy.
4. Cabinet agrees to ensure that there is suitable training for members following the local elections in May 2022, and that climate change forms part of the ongoing training offer to both members and officers in the council.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 December 2021, the committee received representations from Extinction Rebellion Southwark regarding the council's climate change strategy and action plan. Following these representations, the committee made recommendations to Cabinet on 18 January 2022. Cabinet agreed to consider these recommendations and respond at the March 2022 Cabinet meeting.
6. The recommendations were:
 - Revise Southwark's Climate Action Plan to include smart targets throughout, including staged timeline and funding requirements and allocation against each action and policy.
 - Carryout a review to ensure the alignment and integration of all council policies with the Climate Action Plan.
 - Arrange for training for all councillors on monitoring of the delivery of the Climate Action Plan, to be delivered immediately following the 2022 council elections.
 - Return to the overview and scrutiny committee meeting scheduled for 2 March 2022 with a timeline of when the above recommendations will be actioned.
7. This report sets out the council's consideration of these recommendations and updates Cabinet on the steps that are being taken.
8. Since the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Climate Emergency UK has independently assessed the climate strategies and action plans of all councils in the UK. This assessment of climate

strategies was led by trained volunteers from a number of campaign groups. It has compared and scored councils on their climate strategies and action plans and identified areas of strength and also areas to improve.

9. Climate Emergency UK assessed Southwark's strategy and action plan as one of the best in the country. We received an overall score of 79% (average 50%), putting us the second highest in London, and twelfth highest of all councils in the country. We were highlighted as a top performing council specifically in the area of measuring and setting emissions targets – where we received a score of 100%.
10. This assessment reinforces that the council has a strong strategy and action plan in place, and when compared to other councils, is leading the way in many areas. This does not mean that there is not more we can do, and we are always striving to improve our response to the climate emergency.
11. Central to our approach is a plan that is iterative. We need to constantly learn and improve our plan and the work we are doing. The action plan and strategy as currently set out does not represent the sum total of everything we will do over the next decade, which will inevitably adapt in response to new ideas, technologies, funding sources and political priorities. However, it is an emergency plan, which provides a baseline and sets out pathways and priority actions across each of the five priority themes, so that we can measure progress and continually strengthen and improve.
12. The Climate Emergency UK assessment, shows that we are starting from a very strong position with a good and robust strategy in place. The recommendations of OSC, and others, will help us to build on this and improve yet further.

RESPONSE TO RECOMENDATIONS

Revise Southwark's Climate Action Plan to include smart targets throughout, including staged timeline and funding requirements and allocation against each action and policy.

13. When it adopted the climate change strategy and action plan in July 2021, Cabinet said that it would publish an annual report as well as an update to the strategy and action plan each year. The council plans to publish an updated action plan and strategy alongside its annual climate change report in July 2022. As well as strengthening existing actions in the action plan, the council will also consider the recommendations of the Citizens' Jury, integrate with a new Borough Plan, and make necessary changes to the action plan and strategy to reflect these.
14. The council agrees with OSC's recommendation. This work is already underway in line with the July 2021 cabinet report and we expect to

update the plan by July 2022.

15. As part of the programme management of the climate action plan, officers are already building detailed information on the owner, impact, status (work to date and next steps) and risk to delivery of each action. This information is used to track progress and identify key resource, knowledge or funding gaps that may exist in delivering the stated actions.
16. The Council is already working towards a number of SMART targets which connect to the Climate Emergency, including those set out in the current Borough Plan. Additional actions published in July 2021 would benefit from being made SMARTer (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound), in particular with clear timelines and funding status. The section below sets out how the published actions will be updated and improved as part of the 2022 refresh of the action plan. Officers have also reviewed published action plans from some other councils across the UK, in order to learn and develop this thinking.
17. The updated action plan will therefore include the following considerations for each action published in the July 2021 version of the strategy and any new actions identified since.
18. Specific:
 - Where appropriate, actions will be re-worded to provide clarity on the deliverable associated with the action. The specific task will be detailed to allow progress against the action to be clearly tracked.
19. Measurable:
 - Performance Indicators will be added for each action, to allow the status of an action to be tracked against upcoming milestones. These performance indicators will align with annual reporting periods, to allow for measurable tracking of progress.
 - Officers will continue to explore options for associating direct carbon emissions savings with individual or groups of actions. This will not be possible for all actions, for example the completion of a feasibility report, where there are no direct emissions saving in completing the action. This data will only be added where it can clearly be demonstrated as an emissions saving directly associated with the action being taken.
20. Achievable:
 - The director with overall responsibility for each action will be listed, stating the team within the council who is responsible for leading on delivery. Where actions are being delivered by external partners, organisation names will be provided where agreement has been reached.

- The use of milestones will allow achievable annual targets to be set, based on the resource and funding available. Estimated cost will be attributed to each action, banded into high, medium and low. Confirmation will also be provided as to whether funding is in place to deliver the action. This will manage expectation on what can be achieved with the funding and resource in place at the time of reporting.

21. Realistic:

- A RAG (red, amber, green) status will be attributed to each action, summarising the risk associated in the delivery of each action. This will be a summary of the risk to delivery based on the funding, resource and expertise available at the time of reporting. As noted above, the council will clearly state where funding is available for an action, to aid understanding of how realistic each action is.
- The climate strategy is very ambitious in its target of achieving net zero by 2030, and a significant funding gap exists in achieving this aim. Actions must remain ambitious and progressive while identifying the constraints and looking to resolve these through collaboration and innovation.

22. Time-bound:

- A delivery date will be attributed to each action. This will be banded into short, medium and long, with dates reviewed on an ongoing basis.

23. Officers are working to improve the targets to make them SMARTer as set out above. In some areas we expect that there will still be targets which we cannot make as SMART as we would like. As set out previously, the action plan will continue to be reviewed and we will continue to update and improve all actions through the life of the strategy.

Carryout a review to ensure the alignment and integration of all council policies with the Climate Action Plan.

24. The council is already undertaking work to ensure alignment of council policies and a list of key policies has already been set out in the Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan. Over the next year, this will include review of the Southwark Plan, the Fairer Future Procurement Framework, the Air Quality Action Plan and the Movement Plan. Moreover, all council decisions now need to consider climate change as they are brought forward, including how they align with the climate strategy. The Climate Change Team and Constitutional Team are providing guidance to officers, and as well as training for members, we expect to offer training to officers later in the year on the climate emergency and the council's responsibilities.

25. Internal governance structures have been established including a Directors Steering Group and a Chief Officer Oversight group and an operational Officer Coordination Group to ensure that at every level the council's climate work is aligned with the council's other activity.
26. As policies are reviewed and renewed, climate change will be a major consideration and policies will need to align. The immediate priorities are stated within the council's published climate change strategy and action plan.

Arrange for training for all councillors on monitoring of the delivery of the Climate Action Plan, to be delivered immediately following the 2022 council elections.

27. We agree with the recommendation to improve training for members. Last year, the council organised training open to all members on the climate emergency. This was well attended and overall received positive feedback from members.
28. Officers are currently developing the training programme for new members after the council elections in May 2022. Climate change will be included as part of this training offer with all members strongly encouraged to attend.

Return to the overview and scrutiny committee meeting scheduled for 2 March 2022 with a timeline of when the above recommendations will be actioned.

29. Officers were already working on all of the issues that OSC has raised so are pleased that the recommendations from the committee align with the work that the council is undertaking. The timeline for the three recommendations is:
 - Action plan and strategy update, including smart actions - July 2022 Cabinet.
 - Alignment – ongoing, as policies are reviewed we will update them to align with the climate strategy.
 - Training for members – will be delivered as part of the package of training after the May 2022 elections.
30. The Cabinet Member has indicated that she is available to return to OSC if the Chair and the Committee have any further information they require following the publication of this report.

Policy framework implications

31. The recommendations from the report need to be considered when reviewing the climate strategy and action plan ahead of it coming for decision at the July 2022 cabinet meeting.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

32. There are no direct impacts on the community, equalities or health impacts from this report. In adopting the recommendations, future work such as aligning council policies with the climate strategy and changing action plan targets could have impacts. These changes will need to come for decision, and the community, equalities and health impacts should be considered at that time.

Climate change implications

33. Better member training and future improvements to the council's climate strategy and action plan will enable the council to better deliver its climate objectives which will have a positive impact on carbon emissions. Alignment of policies in the future will also mean that more of the council's strategies are working to deliver carbon reductions.

Resource, legal and financial implications

34. The recommendations made by OSC were already being undertaken by officers. There are therefore no additional resource, legal or financial implications. Future changes to the council's climate action plan may have resource, legal and financial implications. These will be considered when this decision is taken.

Consultation

35. Extensive engagement and consultation has taken place in relation to the development of the climate strategy and action plan. The council continues to engage with the public including through its Annual Climate Summit and most recently through the citizens' jury. We intend to review their recommendations and integrate them into the reviewed climate strategy and action plan in July 2022. It would be premature to update targets ahead of this comprehensive piece of engagement work.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Governance

36. There are no significant legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Further reports may need to be prepared to implement some of the recommendations and legal advice on these can be provided when those reports are prepared.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (EL21/141)

37. The strategic director of finance and governance notes the Cabinet Response to the report of the overview and scrutiny committee -

Southwark's climate strategy and action plan and the recommendations in this report.

- 38. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that there are no additional financial implications arising from this report at this stage.
- 39. All staffing and other related costs to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Southwark's Climate Strategy and Action Plan	Constitutional Team	Constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk
Link (copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s104215/Report%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20-%20Climate%20Action%20Plan.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Helen Dennis, Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development	
Lead Officer	Chris Page, Climate Change Director	
Report Author	Tom Sharland, Climate Change Programme Lead	
Version	Final	
Dated	22 February 2022	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	23 February 2022	