



## Adoption of the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy Cllr Hayley Eachus, Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement

---

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	9 February 2021
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Appendix 1:</b>	<b>High-level summary of consultation responses</b>
<b>Appendix 2:</b>	<b>Detailed summary of consultation responses</b>
<b>Appendix 3:</b>	<b>Final Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy (with changes marked)</b>
<b>Appendix 4:</b>	<b>Final Action Plan (with changes marked)</b>
<b>Appendix 5:</b>	<b>Climate Emergency Declaration</b>
<b>Papers relied on:</b>	<b>16 Sep 2020 CEP Report – Draft Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy</b>

---

### Foreword - Cllr Hayley Eachus, Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement

*We have recently felt the impact of a global emergency in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, although the immediate impact may not be as obvious to us here in Basingstoke and Deane, the Climate Emergency has not gone away and still represents arguably the most significant threat to us all. We need to take urgent local action to do our bit to tackle this global issue. Councillors have already come together to support a motion to declare a Climate Emergency and I am keen to harness the approach to date to maintain momentum on this important issue as we ensure tackling this is at the heart of what we do as a council.*

*In order to meet the ambitious local targets outlined in our Climate Emergency declaration, as well as maintain and seek improvements in the air quality of the borough, we need a robust strategy to help us to focus and prioritise our actions moving forward.*

*Following extensive internal and external consultation, I am pleased to now present our strategy for adoption, that sets out a framework to tackle this emergency moving forward as a council and borough, as well as an action plan that sets out our initial planned actions. I'm delighted that the majority of respondents also consider that climate change and air quality are such significant issues that demand priority action, and hope we can all support each other to take action.*

### **Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- **To note and comment on responses to the consultation on draft strategy and resultant amendments**
- **To recommend to Full Council to adopt the final Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy and the 20/21 Action Plan.**

### **Background, corporate objectives and priorities**

As well as being a significant international crisis, climate change is also a key issue for us as a council, as we contribute to international action, while also mitigating against, and adapting to, local impacts. As such, tackling climate change cuts across all areas of the council, and we must start taking action now.

Air pollution is also a major national issue which is associated with a number of adverse health impacts and that particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. Although the borough does not have significant air quality issues, there is a great opportunity to ensure this remains the case.

The importance placed on responding to the Climate Emergency is highlighted in the new Council Plan 2020-2024, and underpins all action and priorities in the medium term but particularly:

- Protecting and enhancing the environment – which includes the specific target of becoming carbon neutral as a council by 2025 and improving air quality
- Planning for the future – by ensuring that adapting to the results of climate change are factored into decisions

This is also consistent with the findings of Horizon 2050 where our residents told us that environmental sustainability was important to them.

### **Glossary of terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
CEP	Communities, Environment and Partnerships Committee

### **Main considerations**

#### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 which set out ambitious targets for both the Council's own activities and those of our residents, businesses and visitors. The declaration is set out in Appendix 5.

- 1.2 Since then, work has been undertaken to develop a new strategy to set out the principles for action to meet these targets to 2030, as well as a plan setting out the actions in more detail.
- 1.3 Drafts of both of these documents have been considered and commented upon by the Communities, Environment and Partnerships Committee (CEP) as part of their meeting on 16 September 2020.
- 1.4 Following this, these documents have been publicly consulted on, to seek the views of residents, businesses and communities in the borough, and start driving wider engagement on this issue.
- 1.5 The overwhelming response to the consultation was positive, with the majority of respondents agreeing on the need to take action and the proposed approach. The council has sought to address comments and challenges received (summarised in Appendix 2) in finalising the strategy, which is now proposed for adoption.
- 1.6 This report sets out the feedback that has been received and the key changes proposed as a result. Once adopted, this strategy will shape future action to tackle climate change and air quality issues in the borough. The action plan alongside this will continue to be implemented and will be regularly updated and reported on.

## 2 The Proposal

### What engagement informed the draft Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan?

- 2.1 Significant input was sought, both internally and externally in drafting the draft strategy and action plan, and more generally on our work to tackle the Climate Emergency. This is depicted in Figure 1 below which highlights the opportunities taken secure views to date. Of particular note is the establishment of an Officer Delivery Board and Members' Advisory Panel (MAP) and support of consultants WSP.

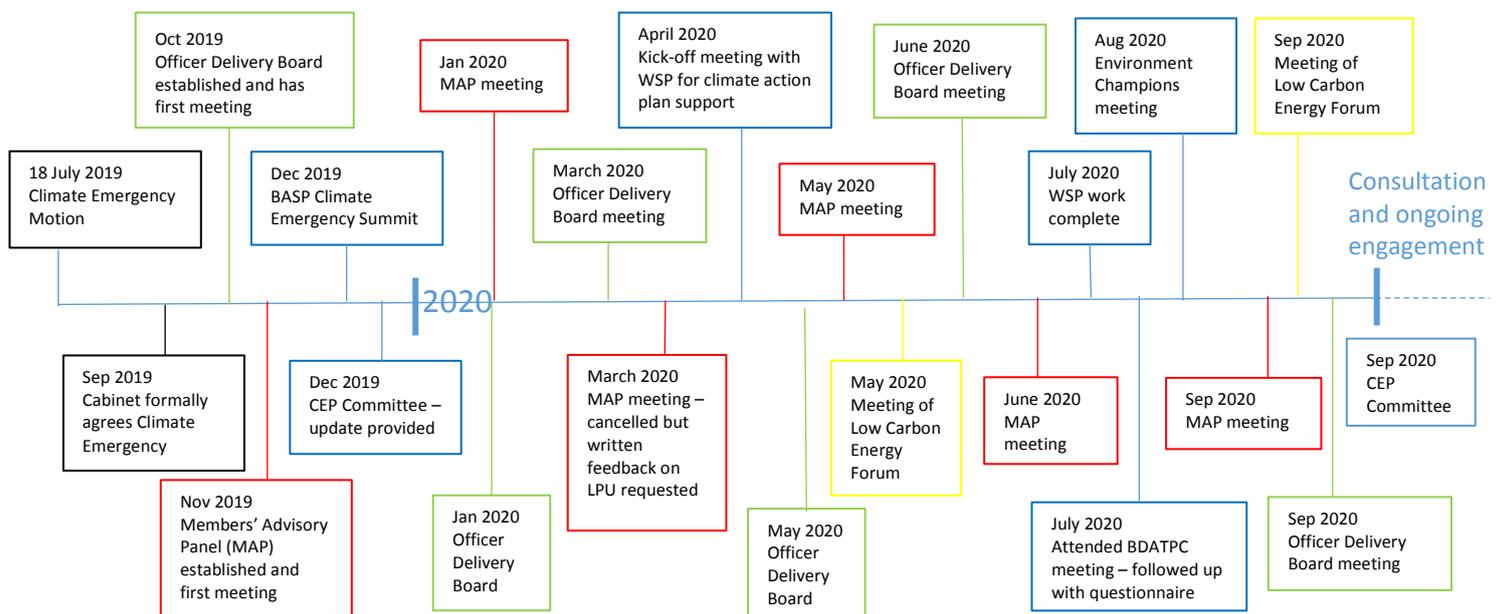


Figure 1 - Timeline of key engagement to date in tackling climate change and developing draft strategy

- 2.2 The Officer Delivery Board was established in order to embed the Climate Emergency across the council, challenging various areas of the council to be considering climate change in their everyday functions, and begin to disseminate actions to tackle our commitments, as well as provide input into council's approach. This is chaired by the Executive Director for Residents Services with oversight by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement and comes together every six weeks.
- 2.3 A Members' Advisory Panel (MAP) is chaired by the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Enforcement and is formed of a cross party group of eight Councillors, coming together every six to eight weeks and having met on six occasions prior to consultation on the draft strategy. This has discussed and contributed ideas on issues ranging from our fleet of vehicles and EV charging provision to the Local Plan Update. The group also met to consider the draft Strategy ahead of consultation, which was positively received.
- 2.4 To support the technical aspect of the work, WSP were commissioned to assist the council in developing an action plan for carbon reduction in late March, following a competitive tender process. This work was looking at both:
- The current emissions of the council's operations, and actions to reach carbon neutrality by 2025; and
  - Emissions across the borough, and actions on how to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- 2.5 This work involved engaging directly with officers across the council in order to understand our current status, including actions that have already been considered or that may be less appropriate in our setting. It also involved engaging with officers in other local councils and organisations, such as the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Basingstoke College of Technology.

How did the council consult on the draft strategy?

- 2.6 Consultation on the strategy took place over a six week period, between 5 October 2020 and 15 November 2020. This consultation took place in the context of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including a national lockdown being imposed towards the end of the consultation period.
- 2.7 However, the council's general consultation principles were still followed and every effort was made to reach as many people as possible, given the importance of this topic to the council, including:
- Inclusion of a summary and how to respond as part of the bi-annual 'Basingstoke and Deane Today' Council publication, sent to all households in the borough
  - Shared via email to existing networks, such town and parish councils, Chambers of Commerce, Basingstoke Area Strategic Partnership, and local representative groups, such as Natural Basingstoke, Basingstoke

Transition Network, Basingstoke Multicultural Forum and the Basingstoke and Deane Over 55s Forum.

- The Low Carbon Energy Forum, an independent group of experts and businesses in the area.
- Information shared periodically on council social media, using various accounts, to publicise and promote awareness of the consultation.

Relevant documents were published on the Council's climate change webpages for comment, as well as a short questionnaire to collect comments. Documents were available in alternative formats on request.

#### What consultation responses were received?

- 2.8 In total, 171 responses to the online questionnaire were received, although some additional comments were also received via email. This included a response on behalf of 181 individual residents from a local community organisation.
- 2.9 Appendix 1 provides a qualitative summary of responses received. Appendix 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of consultation responses received but these are summarised here, as well as responses or changes made, were relevant.
- 2.10 The overwhelming response to the consultation was positive. 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that tackling climate change and poor air quality should be a key priority for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. The majority of respondents (67%) agreed with the proposed approach set out in the draft strategy. A number of additional comments received also supported the outline draft and reiterated the importance of this issue to many in our borough. As such, no fundamental changes to the draft strategy and action plan have been made, but that a number of more minor updates have been as a result of the comments received.
- 2.11 Although there were several comments and respondents that refuted climate change, particularly as a result of human activity, overall, through responses received, it is clear that this is a very important issue to our residents. Many more comments were received impressing the importance of taking rapid action and wanting to see clear, measurable progress in this area. This also included comments that this strategy does not go far enough or lacks detail. As a result, amendments have been made in response and it is proposed that the action plan that supports the strategy is further refined in the future, and that this represents an initial plan to be updated as actions are developed and refined.
- 2.12 In developing the strategy and action plan, the Borough Council have aimed to maintain the balance between a robust and detailed strategy, based on sound assessment and science, while also being accessible to all, and sufficiently flexible to remain applicable for timeframe out to 2030. Additionally, we have tried to be pragmatic in adopting a strategy and action plan publicly, in order to demonstrate positive action, while acknowledging that some aspects of the action plan will require the development of further detail.

2.13 As highlighted above, there were some key themes that emerged from responses, some of which have led to some minor changes to strengthen the document, while many have emphasised the importance of some areas, or provided additional ideas for actions the council can consider:

- **Climate change and air quality are separate issues** – the council acknowledges that this is the case, but the sources of pollutants that cause both issues are intrinsically linked. This strategy is predominantly a climate change strategy, in light of the council declaring a climate emergency. However, the strategy aims to acknowledge the synergy in certain policies that tackle both and avoiding initiatives that are designed to reduce carbon emissions that inadvertently have an impact on our air quality. It's vital that our actions to tackle climate change holistically take into account the impact to our air quality so we take a balanced and measured approach.
- **Role of planning/development** – the council is currently undertaking an update to its Local Plan, which sets the local planning framework for development in the borough. This is a critical enabling policy for the borough to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and tackling the Climate Emergency is at the heart of this update. The council [recently consulted on issues and options for potential policies](#), so additional feedback from the consultation on the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy will also be fed into that process.
- **Importance of green space** – the importance of protecting and enhancing our natural environment and green spaces was a common comment. Our local natural environment is important in the many services it provides, alongside carbon absorption and is also dealt with in other policies, such as our Green Infrastructure strategy.
- **Some further detail on carbon footprint** – we have tried to clarify elements of this area in the final document, based on comments received, while also aiming to keep the information simple and act as a suitable starting point from which to measure progress. We have also updated the borough-wide carbon footprint, based on the [latest government dataset](#), so that the baseline year is now 2018 as opposed to 2017.
- **Improved recycling/waste collection** – as part of this strategy, we want to encourage residents and businesses to reduce consumption and waste as much as possible, but acknowledge this is challenging, and that most residents want to recycle as much as possible – plastics in particular. The ability to recycle plastics is governed by Hampshire County Council facilities and ensuring there is a sustainable market for these in the UK. However, comments will be fed back into wider work on consideration of waste disposal and recycling within the county.
- **Adaptation** – adapting to expected changes in our climate are vital, both locally and ensuring we are resilient to global changes. This has been enhanced within the strategy, although further action is required to plan this area of work.

- 2.14 Many responses also sought more detail on actions. These are already laid out in the accompanying action plan. This will be regularly updated and include further detail on progress against targets (see below).
- 2.15 Separately, alongside the consultation on the Local Plan ‘issues and options’, we issued a short questionnaire to local infrastructure providers in the borough. As part of this, questions were asked on their plans to tackling climate change and any details of their operations specifically in Basingstoke and Deane. We received seven responses to this element that will enable further engagement with these organisations to support our Climate Emergency targets. These included Southern Water, who also have a target of being net zero carbon by 2030 and Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust who are also hoping to set a 2030 net zero target. This may present opportunity for collaboration in future.
- 2.16 Finally, a further MAP session was recently held to discuss responses to the consultation and resultant amendments to the strategy and action plan. This also included members of the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee and Local Plan MAP in light of their future involvement in policy development to inform the Local Plan Update. This session provided Councillors with an update on the proposed final strategy as well as work that has commenced on a climate change evidence base to support the Local Plan Update. Comments arising did not require any additional amendments, however, will be incorporated as part of implementing the strategy once adopted, as well as feeding into the Local Plan Update.

#### What’s next?

- 2.17 Once adopted, the strategy sets out a clear framework for implementing and monitoring actions moving forward, as well as communicating and educating what we are doing and what needs to be done.
- 2.18 Although work has already started on many actions, public buy-in of the strategy and actions should allow further commitment and accountability in delivering against actions, both internally and externally.
- 2.19 This Action Plan is a first iteration. Although some actions are already clearly defined, there are areas that need further consideration and development about the role and actions the borough council can take. More clarity will be added in a number of areas in due course as work in these areas progresses.
- 2.20 On-going engagement throughout the delivery and implementation of this strategy through the actions outlined will be vital. Regular feedback and input into this work area is encouraged and welcomed and annual updates on progress will be provided to CEP Committee.
- 2.21 Immediate and longer-term action to tackle the Climate Emergency must also be considered in the context of recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Clean Growth is at the heart of the council’s [Economic Recovery Framework](#) which complements the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy in shaping the future of the borough.

### **3 Options Analysis**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the proposed changes made to the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy following consultation and recommend to Council to adopt the final version for future implementation.
- 3.2 The council could choose not to adopt the strategy or action plan, however, this approach would mean the council does not have an up-to-date strategy and set of actions for taking local action to tackle climate change and prevent local air quality issues. This would significantly hamper efforts to meet the targets set out in the Climate Emergency declaration and go against the majority view of residents that this should be a priority area for the council.

### **Corporate implications**

#### **4 Legal**

- 4.1 The Strategy will form a policy framework document under article 4 paragraph 4.3(b) of the constitution which will be adopted by Council and be the responsibility of Council. The Action Plan will sit under this Strategy and can be approved by cabinet, forming actions needed to deliver the Strategy

#### **5 Financial**

- 5.1 It is expected that there will be costs associated with delivering the new Climate Change Strategy and a new reserve of £1M has been created for this purpose.
- 5.2 Funding requirements will be identified, reported and released from this reserve in accordance with the Council's financial regulations as the Action Plan evolves.

#### **6 Risk management**

- 6.1 A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the council's risk management process and has identified no significant (Red or Amber) residual risks that cannot be fully minimised by existing or planned controls or additional procedures.

#### **7 Equalities**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken at the draft stage to consider the impact of the new Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2020 on the protected characteristics groups and its implications for the Public Sector Equality Duty. It was concluded that the proposed approach would be positive for everyone who lives, works and visits the borough.
- 7.2 The EIA was revisited after the public consultation and no issues were identified for any protected groups, apart from sex (gender). The Women's Equality Party noted that, although the desired outcome of the strategy would have a positive impact on all, the implementation of the strategy may benefit some groups more than others, including the risks of perpetuating or even exacerbating existing structural societal inequalities. They presented

suggestions for actions they considered could enable social justice to be addressed alongside tackling climate change. Their suggestions, along with other responses, will continue to be considered in the implementation of the strategy through the Action Plan, to ensure a balanced set of actions that also tackle societal injustices.

- 7.3 If the plans are approved, further equalities implications should be considered as and when specific work is rolled out.

## **8 Consultation and communication**

- 8.1 The consultation was supported by a communications and marketing plan that targeted key stakeholders, residents and businesses through a range of channels including digital via the website social media and council e-newsletter, through Basingstoke & Deane Today which is delivered through all residents' doors and the local media and community publications. The delivery of the strategy will also be supported by a communications and marketing plan to meet the communications objectives including awareness raising, myth-busting, information-giving idea-sharing and encouraging behaviour change.

## **9 Climate change**

- 9.1 Although there is no direct carbon impact as a result of this decision, this strategy is directly focused on tackling climate change (and air quality). Adopting and implementing this strategy, and associated action plan, is essential for the council to meet the aspirations set out in the Climate Emergency declaration.

## **10 HR**

- 10.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

## **Conclusion**

### **11 Summary and reason for the decision**

- 11.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, setting ambitious targets in the process. Adopting this Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy provides a framework for action moving forward, with key areas of focus,

### **12 The options considered and rejected**

- 12.1 It is considered that only small scale changes are required to the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy, based on the consultation responses, most of which were more about adding detail or suggestions for additional actions. As such, the option of making wholesale changes has been considered but rejected. It is, however, proposed to update the action plan on an annual basis to respond to more detailed work being undertaken in a number of areas.

- 12.2 As above, the council could choose not to adopt the Climate Change and Air Quality and associated action plan, or take any action to tackle the Climate Emergency at all. However, this would be contrary to their own declaration and the majority view of respondents to this consultation.

**Date: 9 Feb 2021**  
**Decision taken by: Cabinet**

<b>Lead officer</b>	Ruth Ormella
<b>Report author</b>	Sam Taylor Climate Emergency Project Manager 01256 845437 Ext 2437
<b>Version</b>	Cabinet
<b>Dated</b>	Jan 2021
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Confidentiality</b>	It is considered that information contained within this report (and appendices) do not contain exempt information under the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and therefore can be made public.