

**COMMITTEE:** EXECUTIVE **REF NO:** E/19/13  
**DATE:** 9 JULY 2019  
**SUBJECT:** PROPOSAL TO DECLARE A CLIMATE  
EMERGENCY AND COMMIT TO ACTION TO  
ACHIEVE CARBON NEUTRALITY  
**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** COUNCILLOR PHILIP SMART  
**HEAD OF SERVICE:** JAMES FAIRCLOUGH

<p><b><i>Short description of report content and the decision requested:</i></b></p> <p>This report details a proposal to declare a Climate Emergency and commit to action to achieve carbon neutrality. Executive is asked to approve the recommendations.</p>
<p><b><i>Ward(s) affected:</i></b></p> <p>All</p>
<p><b><i>List of Appendices included in this report:</i></b></p> <p>None</p>
<p><i>This report has been prepared by James Fairclough – Head of Culture &amp; Environment, Email: <a href="mailto:james.fairclough@ipswich.gov.uk">james.fairclough@ipswich.gov.uk</a></i></p>
<p><b><i><u>This report was prepared after consultation with:</u></i></b></p> <p><i>Internal consultees</i></p> <p>IBC Legal Services</p> <p><i>External consultees</i></p> <p>None</p> <p><b><i><u>The following policies form a context to this report:</u></i></b></p> <p><i>(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)</i></p> <p>Building a Better Ipswich 2017</p>

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW**

*(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)*

1. None

**OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS**

*(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)*

1. None

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## **1. Introduction**

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- 1.1 On 8th October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report on the state of climate science. They warned that if the planet warmed by 1.5C there would be some devastating consequences, such as the loss of most coral reefs, and increased extreme weather such as heatwaves and floods. Yet the consequences of allowing 2C warming would be truly catastrophic. Given that the planet is currently heading for 3-4C warming, keeping to 1.5C requires a radical shift across energy, land, industrial, urban and other systems to reduce emissions, unprecedented in history for its speed.
- 1.2 'Climate Emergency' is an internationally recognised declaration being used by Councils and other Local Authorities, predominantly in the UK, Canada, Australia and the USA, to publicly declare concern over the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) findings which recognise the adverse global impact of the changing climate. The declaration also serves as a commitment to take urgent action and aspire towards carbon neutrality. It is a powerful call to action that engages the entire community; it's not just about the practical actions that a Council might take.
- 1.3 There is no single definition of what 'Climate Emergency' means, but many local areas say they want to be carbon-neutral by 2030.
- 1.4 Carbon neutral, also called carbon neutrality, is the result of organisations, businesses and individuals taking action to remove as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they put in to it. The overall goal is to achieve a zero carbon footprint.

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## **2. Background**

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- 2.1 Ipswich Borough Council has had a carbon reduction target since 2008.
- 2.2 By 2014/15, the organisation had achieved a reduction of 21% against a 2007/08 baseline.
- 2.3 A new target of an additional 25% reduction (by 2025), from a 2014/15 baseline, was agreed by Executive in August 2015.
- 2.4 IBC had already achieved a further 14% reduction from its 2014/15 baseline by the end of the financial year 2017/18.
- 2.5 In terms of the Council's direct contribution to reducing overall carbon consumption, some of the initiatives already implemented include:-
  - a. Spending £12m on improving the energy efficiency of Council homes, including the replacement of 2,485 boilers with energy

efficient condensing boilers and heating systems including Thermostatic Radiator Valves, insulating the lofts, cavity walls and external walls of 1,274 properties.

- b. Constructing new council homes to high sustainability standards.
- c. Using planning policy to ensure that new homes constructed within the Borough boundary are constructed to high sustainability standards.
- d. Delivered in excess of twenty carbon reduction projects across our estate including the installation of a pool cover at Fore Street Pool, Building Energy Management Systems and replacing existing lighting in Council buildings with more energy efficient LED lighting.
- e. Installed solar panels at 10 sheltered housing schemes and Crown and Fore Street swimming pools.
- f. Provision of over 100 electric vehicle charging points within the Council's car parks.
- g. Investing £4m over 2 years in a replacement programme for the Council's fleet, procuring vehicles that produce zero emissions such as cars and car derived vans, with larger vehicles such as panel vans and tippers being procured to Euro VI standard for emissions.
- h. Commitment to invest in Variable Message Signs to provide clear signage to the nearest car park and information on the number of available parking spaces to reduce search time for vacant spaces, reducing traffic volumes and emissions.
- i. Continuing with the 2 for 1 tree replacement policy to ensure that the number of trees within the Borough increases year on year.
- j. Promotion of waste reduction and recycling initiatives for residents and businesses
- k. Increased number of local recycling 'bring sites' for materials such as glass, small electrical appliances, books and textiles
- l. Encouraging local companies to supply goods and services to the Council

2.6 In terms of the Council's enabling role, some of the initiatives already implemented include:-

- a. Taking steps to promote sustainable methods in respect of mobility of goods and people.
  - b. Promoting low-emissions buses and taxis in partnership with the County Council, bus companies and taxi companies.
  - c. Promoting Clean Air Day, providing opportunities for residents to find out more about pollution, share information and make the air cleaner and healthier for everyone.
- 2.7 Options and choices do exist to reduce carbon emissions from human activities, including energy generation and use, transport, business and industry, waste generation, food consumption and land use; but these options are not being adopted and introduced quickly enough.
- 2.8 Recent initiatives implemented elsewhere include:-
  - a. CityTrees that aren't actually trees, but are a densely packed moss culture, vertically housed in an unit that blends in with its urban surroundings. In an area of 3.5 square metres (37.6 square feet), it is claimed the City Tree can do the equivalent job of 275 trees of filtering the air of fine dust, nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide (up to 240 metric tons per year).
  - b. Smart lampposts that could slash electricity bills and deliver energy savings of between 50-70%.
  - c. The Greater London Authority runs the Cleaner Heat Cashback scheme to support small and medium sized businesses switch to renewable energy or connect to a local heat network.
- 2.9 The UK parliament has passed a motion making it the first in the world to declare an "environment and climate emergency". Subsequently the government has released plans to amend the current target to reduce UK carbon emissions by 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050, to a target of the UK becoming carbon neutral by 2050.
- 2.10 In November 2018, the councils of two major cities, Bristol and Manchester, passed motions declaring a 'climate emergency' and setting targets aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030 and 2038 respectively. Since then, there has been a wave of Climate Emergency declarations by councils across the UK.
- 2.11 Examples of towns and cities across the UK that have already declared commitments regarding carbon emissions include:-
  - a. Nottingham has committed to becoming the first 'net-zero carbon' city in the UK, after setting a target of 2028 to go carbon neutral.

- b. Suffolk County Council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and have set a target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- c. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has declared a climate emergency and set a target for net zero carbon emissions by 2030, or a justification for a later date if the review finds this unachievable.
- d. Northampton Borough Council has declared a climate emergency and set a target for net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- e. Cambridge City Council has declared a climate emergency and set a target of reaching net zero carbon by 2030.
- f. Manchester has declared a climate emergency and said it would become carbon zero by 2038.
- g. South Cambridgeshire has set a target of being carbon neutral by 2050.

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### **3. Relevant Policies**

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- 3.1 Building a Better Ipswich 2017 – The Council’s Corporate Plan
- 3.2 Air Quality Action Plan 2019 – 2024
- 3.3 25:25 Carbon Reduction Strategy

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### **4. Options Considered / Under Consideration**

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- 4.1 The Council has already committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 25% from the 2014/15 levels. A number of options for consideration are set out below.
  - a. **Option 1:** Do nothing further. The target already in place indicates an on-going commitment to the issue and means that specific work is already being undertaken to reduce the Council’s carbon emissions.
  - b. **Option 2:** To increase the target for reduction of carbon emissions to a percentage that is higher than 25%.
  - c. **Option 3:** To commit to becoming carbon neutral at a future date between 2030 and 2050.
  - d. **Option 4:** To declare a ‘Climate Emergency’ and commit to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- 4.2 Implementation of Options 2 to 4 above will require further consideration:-

- a. Ensuring that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with the targets set.
- b. Ensuring that Councillors and Officers embed this target in all areas and take responsibility for reducing, as rapidly as possible, the carbon emissions resulting from the Council's activities and produce an action plan within 12 months, together with budget actions and a measured baseline.
- c. Ensuring that on an annual basis the Medium Term Financial Plan makes financial provision for the actions the Council will take to address the target set.
- d. Ensuring that the Council considers the impact of climate change and the environment when reviewing Council policies and strategies.
- e. As other Local Authorities have stated they will - call on the UK Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to achieve the target set, and ask local MPs to do likewise.

4.3 Projects that the Council could implement to start addressing the climate emergency, could include:

- a. Working with partners such as Suffolk County Council to promote more cycling, walking and use of shared and public transport.
- b. Providing more electric car charging points in car parks and other suitable locations, including for use by council tenants and council vehicles.
- c. Adopting high energy efficiency standards and providing for the effective use of recycling services in new buildings through the planning system.
- d. Demonstrating and developing a programme for retrofitting high standards of energy saving and insulation in existing council buildings, including housing, and assets; initially focusing on where the greatest benefits could be gained.
- e. Promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling on the go, and supporting community projects.
- f. Sourcing electricity used by the council from renewable energy suppliers and providing support for smart energy infrastructure, including demand management and storage.
- g. Supporting green businesses and social enterprises.
- h. Review of planning policies and investment opportunities for local renewable energy and infrastructure and environmental markets, as well as divestment from fossil fuels.
- i. Adaptation for flooding, coastal erosion and other impacts of climate change.

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## 5. Consultations

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- 5.1 Consultation has been undertaken with internal stakeholders including the Council's Corporate Management Team and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change.
- 5.2 It is intended that if Executive resolves to increase the Council's target for reduction of carbon emissions that it will set up a Cross Party Working Group, involving Councillors, residents, relevant experts, local businesses and other relevant groups. The group will consider strategies and actions being developed by the Council and other partner organisations and develop a strategy in line with the target set.

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## 6. Risk Management

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<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Consequence of risk</b>	<b>Risk Controls</b>	<b>Probability of risk occurring taking account of controls (scale 1-6) 1 – almost impossible 6 – very high</b>	<b>Impact of risk, if it occurred taking account of actions (scale 1 – negligible; 4 – catastrophic)</b>	<b>Actions to mitigate risk</b>
1. Failure to achieve target	Do not meet the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030	Project plans, performance monitoring, reports to CMT and Executive, Senior Officer and Political commitment	3	4	Robust project management and ongoing political commitment
2. Unable to identify sufficient projects to deliver carbon neutrality	Do not meet the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030	Close monitoring of programme and projected targets.	3	4	Seeking out and implementing good practice
3. Lack of resilience in the team responsible for delivering the commitment	Projects fail to be identified or implemented	Ensure there is a clear emphasis across the organisation of the importance of identifying and implementing carbon	3	4	There is a need for ongoing funding to ensure there are dedicated project officers

		reduction projects.			
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## **7. Environmental Impact Assessment**

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- 7.1 A Carbon Reduction Strategy has a positive environmental effect by delivering reductions in carbon emissions, promoting the benefits of carbon reduction and training staff in how to reduce carbon in the workplace and home.

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## **8. Equalities and Diversity Implications**

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- 8.1 Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 8.2 The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- 8.3 The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.
- 8.4 The policy and issues considered in this report are primarily focused on environmental issues and therefore the impact of any changes to groups with protected characteristics is neutral. Specific actions to achieve carbon neutrality will be assessed for their impact on those with protected characteristics.

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## **9. Financial Considerations**

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- 9.1 Implementation of Options 2 to 4 in section 4.1 above will require the appointment of dedicated project officer support to develop and champion the delivery of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. A provisional budget of £50,000 in the 2019/20 financial year will need to be allocated to allow this work. This sum to include £35,000 from the General Fund in 2019/20 and £15,000 from the HRA Budget in 2019/20. Funding for future years will need to be considered within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 onwards.
- 9.2 Implementation of Options 2 to 4 in section 4.1 above will require a capital budget to be made available to fund initiatives that have been

identified which will reduce carbon emissions, but that cannot be funded from any existing budget provision. It is recommended that this budget is initially set at £100k per annum commencing in the 2020/21 financial year.

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## **10. Legal Considerations**

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- 10.1 Under the Climate Change Act 2008, it is the duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than it was in 1990.
- 10.2 In 2012, the Committee on Climate Change (independent advisers to central government) recommended the introduction of a statutory duty for local authorities to develop and implement carbon reduction plans. However, central government has not implemented this recommendation and in December 2013 central government reported that it has no plans to introduce a statutory duty for local authorities to develop and implement local carbon plans because it would not be consistent with the government's commitment to localism.

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## **11. Performance Monitoring**

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- 11.1 Monitoring performance at regular intervals will be vital to ensure that the targets are achieved within the timescales set and ensure that resources are adequately directed.
- 11.2 It is recommended that progress towards the target set continues to be presented to Executive on a regular basis.

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## **12. Conclusions**

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- 12.1 The world's climate is changing. It has always changed in response to natural environmental processes, but it is now widely accepted that human activities are leading to climate change of a scale and pace that is unprecedented.
- 12.2 The 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C', published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018, (a) describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and (b) confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from local authorities, civil society and the private sector.
- 12.3 Policies to cut emissions also have associated health, wellbeing and economic benefits.
- 12.4 Residents and businesses cannot be expected to make the reductions necessary on their own. There will be a need to consider changes in infrastructure, incentives, regulations and taxation to make low carbon

living easier and a common social norm, and that, recognising this, a growing number of UK local authorities have already passed 'Climate Emergency' motions.

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### **13. Recommendations**

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**13.1 That Executive resolves to declare a Climate Emergency and starts working towards Ipswich Borough Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030.**

Reason: To confirm its continued commitment to achieving a reduction in carbon emissions and delivering the aims of the Building A Better Ipswich 2017 Corporate Plan

**13.2 That Executive calls on the UK Government to provide guidance and the powers and resources to make carbon neutrality possible.**

Reason: The government has a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and support local authorities commitments to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible

**13.3 That Executive resolves to develop a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, with a cross party working group and the necessary officer support to assist with investigative work, drafting the plan and the delivery of early projects. This plan to be presented to Executive in June 2020.**

Reason: To engage with all local stakeholders to formulate and agree a robust Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan that achieves carbon neutrality by 2030

**13.4 That Executive resolves to make financial provision of £50k in the 2019/20 financial year for the necessary officer support to develop a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.**

Reason: To enable the costs for 2019/20 to be met

**13.5 That Executive resolves to make financial provision within the Medium Term Financial Plan of £100k per annum of Capital Expenditure in respect of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, commencing in the 2020/21 financial year.**

Reason: To facilitate effective budget planning