

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT & PLACE SCRUTINY**

17 November 2019

Report Title: Climate Change Mitigation

Submitted by: Chief Executive

Portfolios: Environment and Recycling

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To note the recommendations of the Special meeting of the Committee on the 25 November 2019 and to agree the terms of reference for a Task and Finish Group to consider further the issue of climate change Mitigation

Recommendation

That members approve the terms of reference set out at paragraph 3.2 of this report for the task and finish group on climate change mitigation.

Reasons

At the special meeting of the Committee on 25 November 2019 members resolved to set up a task and finish group and to agree draft terms of reference at their next meeting.

1. Background

1.1 Members met at a special meeting on the 25 November 2019 to consider the motion relating to climate change approved by full council on the 3 April 2019 and to consider what actions can be taken by the Borough Council to address the adverse effects of climate change.

1.2 A copy of the report to 25 November special meeting is attached for members ease of reference.

1.3 Members resolved:

That a task and finish group, including representatives from Keele University and other experts to be determined, be established to progress the actions set out in the report of the Executive Director – Operational Services now submitted; the terms of reference to be agreed at the next meeting of this Committee.

2. Issues

2.1 At its 25th November meeting on Climate Change, Committee received a report from the Executive Director of Operational Services which noted that following the April Council resolution, the Council

aimed to make Newcastle under Lyme a carbon-neutral borough by 2030 for both Borough Council activities and Borough wide. Members were informed that this was more radical than the UK Governments target of 2050 and that the implications of this may be an issue that Scrutiny Members might wish to understand more fully, as work develops.

- 2.2 In terms of the Government's position, on 12 June 2019, the Government announced that the UK would eradicate its net contribution to climate change by 2050 and it is understood that the Government intended that a statutory instrument would be laid before Parliament to amend the Climate Change Act 2008, in order to implement the announcement. This would mean that the UK would be the first G7 country to legislate for net zero emissions and is likely to introduce statutory responsibilities upon all levels of government, including Borough Councils.
- 2.3 The Director suggested that as part of their work members might wish to assess the extent to which this new legislation would require Council to act, and how this relates to the already stated commitment and aims of the Council in relation to carbon neutrality once more information was known. There was no indication at this stage whether the Government would provide funding to progress this work or whether it will be left to each local area to identify funding opportunities. If funding was not made available, this could present a major barrier to the achievement of carbon neutral aspirations.
- 2.4 The Committee also heard from Professor Zoe Robinson, from Keele University, who explained the scientific measurements and data which led to the declaration of a climate emergency, explained what carbon neutral meant, what measures were being introduced and what the Borough, its partners and residents could do in response.
- 2.5 At the meeting, Committee resolved to form a Task & Finish Group, including representatives from Keele University and other experts to be determined, to progress the actions set out in the report of the Executive Director – Operational Services. Members agreed to determine the terms of reference for this group at its next meeting.
- 2.6 In setting the terms of reference for this Task & Finish Group, members may wish to be aware of other work which is also taking place regarding this agenda in line with the Council resolution:
 - The Vice Chancellor of Keele University is hosting a series of cross sector meetings comprising key decision makers and influencers from across the Borough with a view to shaping and driving change across the Borough;
 - The Chief Executive is working with the Staffordshire Chief Executives' group to shape as far as practical a county wide agenda on climate change.

3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 Across Staffordshire Councils have set different targets for securing Carbon Neutral status, with target dates ranging from 2030 to 2050 (the gov't target). In due course it may be desirable to align the Council's target date with those of other organisations for some specific areas of work. In considering how best the Council should move forward with this agenda, it will be useful to draw a distinction between work to make the *Council* a carbon neutral organisation, and work to make the *Borough* carbon neutral across all sectors. To avoid duplication of effort, members may wish to focus their Task & Finish Group on the additional actions to be taken by the Council to secure carbon neutrality as an organisation by 2030, as opposed to the wider work at Borough & County level which is being shaped by a wide range of organisations across a much larger geography.
- 3.2 Proposed terms of reference for the Task & Finish Group:

- To review the Council's record on mitigation and adaptation on climate change and to make recommendations to Cabinet with regard to future action
- To establish a baseline in respect of the Council's current carbon footprint
- To consider work to date to mitigate the adverse effects of the Council's services
- To review options and timelines to achieve the target of the Council as an organisation being carbon neutral by 2030.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

To agree formal Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group

5. **Options Considered**

This matter was referred to the Scrutiny Committee by the meeting of Council 3 April which invited this Committee to review the Council's record on mitigation and adaptation in respect of climate change and to make recommendations to Cabinet with regard to future action. It would have been possible to deal with this by way of reports to Committee but a Task and Finish Group was felt to be a more appropriate option given the complex nature of the subject matter.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

There are currently no statutory requirements for local councils to set or negotiate targets to reduce their own or area wide emissions, although this may change as and when the Climate Change Act 2008 is amended by Statutory Instrument.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Not completed at this stage.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

None directly arising from this report but this will need to be assessed as work proceeds.

9. **Major Risks**

None directly arising from this report but a full risk assessment will form part of a Carbon Neutral Plan for the Borough.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

The Task & Finish Group, once established, will inform the Council's approach to both climate change and sustainability.

11. **Key Decision Information**

N/A

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

25 November Special Meeting and Council 3 April 2019

13. **List of Appendices**
Report to 25 November 2019 meeting and minute

14. **Background Papers**

N/A