

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF THE ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE WORKING PARTY ON 10 DECEMBER 2020

PART A : REPORT

SUBJECT: CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE

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DATE: October 2020
EXTN: 37835
PORTFOLIO AREA: Community Wellbeing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 15 January 2020 and tasked Officers to establish and action plan to make the activities of the Council carbon neutral by 2030. This is an update report identifying the Councils environmental activities and plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Environment and Leisure Working Group note this report.

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 In November 2019 the Director of Services presented a paper to the Environment and Leisure Working Group to provide an update on the global position in respect of climate change, the response of HM Government and proposed a corporate response. This was set out in four recommendations:
1. Arun District Council declares a Climate Emergency;
 2. The impact and mitigation of climate change is considered and incorporated into all policy and key decision making;
 3. Officers work through the Environment & Leisure Working Group to produce an action plan with milestones to make the activities of Arun District Council carbon neutral by 2030; and
 4. A supplementary estimate be approved for up to £180k to fund the post of Climate Change and Sustainability Manager for three years, including consultancy advice to support the calculation of carbon budgets both within the Council and more widely through its role in community leadership and work with partners and local businesses.
- 1.2 The Working Group agreed to the recommendations and points 1 to 3 were ratified by Cabinet on 9 December (Decision Notice C/029/091219). The funding for a Climate Change and Sustainability Manager had subsequently been built into the Council's Budget for 2020/21. Full Council resolved to support the recommendations on 15 January 2020.

- 1.3 A key component of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency is the appointment of a Climate Change and Sustainability Manager. This new position will be responsible for reviewing all of the activities that the Council undertakes in the form of a carbon audit. It will then set out the findings in a strategy and project plan to achieve the Council's objective of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.4 The Council has a good record on delivering environmental projects and energy efficiencies across all service areas. The following list is indicative of the projects undertaken or in development:
- Increase amenity grassland and wildflower meadows
 - Draft Ten-year Tree Planting strategy
 - Woodland habitat improvement
 - Green waste recycling
 - Bedding Plant Review
 - Eliminating the use of peat by 2025
 - Rainwater capture and use
 - Waste reduction (n.b. single use plastics)
 - Smart bins
 - Solar powered car parking ticket dispensers
 - Electric Charge Point Installation in ADC car parks
 - Photovoltaic cells on the Civic Centre roof
 - Electric and hybrid vehicles
 - Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Strategy (2020 to 2025)
 - Improving the Energy Efficiency of the housing stock
 - Planning Policy: energy efficient homes and businesses, improved road infrastructure, better walking and cycling routes to encourage active travel
 - Energy efficient leisure centres
 - Decarbonising buildings
- 1.5 Environmental and energy efficiency projects are delivered across the Council and it will be the responsibility of the new Climate Change and Sustainability Manager to work with officers to capture this work and further develop the potential to achieve the aim of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.6 The following provides further information on the environmental work in each service area.
- 1.7 **Neighbourhoods**
- 1.8 Not surprisingly, the Greenspace team has a long association with improving biodiversity. As early as the 1990's wildflowers were planted to encourage and sustain insect populations. The current Service Delivery Plans require the amenity grass

areas (i.e. those areas regularly mown) to be evaluated and where practicable developed into long grass regimes, possibly with the inclusion of wildflower meadows. Arun currently has twenty-five wildflower meadow sites (Appendix 1).

- 1.9 The current percentage of amenity grass areas required each year to be developed for additional grassland is 5%. Not only does this provide additional wildlife refuge, it decreases the amount of grass cutting required.
- 1.10 A ten-year tree planting strategy is also in the process of being drafted that will increase the number of trees in the district and ensure a range of species to make our woodland diverse and sustainable.
- 1.11 The Council's Tree and Maintenance Team operate to sustain and improve woodland habitats. Where possible, arisings from tree works and timber are left on site to encourage insects and where safe and appropriate dead trees are allowed to stand in situ. Any arisings that cannot be left on site are disposed of as green waste.
- 1.12 The green waste generated through the Grounds Maintenance contract is recycled either by Tivoli at their composting facility at Ford, or at Stubbs Yard. Compost at Stubbs Yard is screened and is returned to parks as mulch or wood chip, the latter is often used to top up footpaths or suppress weeds. The volume of green waste generated from the contract is in excess of 1,250m³ per year.
- 1.13 The Council's peat use has been drastically cut over the past decade. In part this is due to the reduction in the number of bedding plants being planted. In 2010 115,000 summer and 105,000 winter bedding plants were propagated across the district using 16.61m³ of peat in the summer and 15.56m³ in winter; and an additional 20m³ was used when planting.
- 1.14 As of 2020 the number of bedding plants has reduced to 20,000 summer and 15,000 winter. Peat is now procured from responsible sources (as defined by the European Peat and Growing Media Association) and is used in a growing media which is 30% peat-free using timber derived from woodchips from FSC® certified sources. The total peat used in 2020 will be:
 - Winter bedding 2.89 m³ (Actual peat content 2.02 m³)
 - Summer bedding 3.31 m³ (Actual peat content 2.31 m³)
- 1.15 Between 2010-2020 peat use has been reduced by 88.12%. Peat is no longer used when planting, instead a screened compost mulch (using the green waste created from Council operations) is incorporated into bedding borders.
- 1.16 The Council will continue to work with its supplier to further reduce peat and completely eliminate its use by 2025 at the latest and it will also support growing media research projects.
- 1.14 The conservation of water is also a priority. Two water tanks have been installed at Hotham Park carriage yard to collect rainwater from building roofs. This water is used for watering bedding plants after planting and during periods of drought.
- 1.15 Cleansing have a priority to reduce household waste, particularly single use plastics. Following the roll out of recycling boxes to residents in Arundel an estimated 39,000 single use plastic bags will have been eliminated from use over the course of a year. Solar powered 'big belly' bins have also been introduced at Felpham. The load capacity of each bin is increased to reduce the frequency of collections, but inbuilt technology also notifies contractors when the bin is full.

- 1.16 In 2019 Biffa introduced the kerbside collection of small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). To date approximately 32 tonnes of this specialist waste has been collected and disposed of environmentally.
- 1.17 Biffa has also introduced four electric supervisor vehicles into its fleet and is proposing to trial a low carbon fuelled refuse vehicle for green waste collection. The contract renewal in 2023 will provide further opportunities to explore more sustainable options for the Biffa fleet of vehicles.
- 1.18 The grounds maintenance contractor Tivoli is also exploring opportunities to use electric vehicles and the use of battery powered tools replace petrol driven machines.
- 1.19 The Arun District Council fleet of leased vehicles is also under review. Between April 2021 and April 2022, the current fleet of 19 diesel engine vehicles will either be replaced or removed from service. Where possible, vehicles will be replaced with 100% electric fuelled vehicles and if fully electric vehicles are not appropriate, the lowest reasonable low emission alternatives will be explored.
- 1.20 In regard to Car Parks, the Council's has installed solar power to ticket to reduce the reliance on grid electricity and in April 2020 Cabinet gave approved a joint initiative with West Sussex County Council for an Electric Vehicle Strategy and Charge Point Installation project as a step toward meeting the growing demand for hybrid and e-vehicles. The project aims to deliver a county wide network of charge points connected to the electricity grid. The Car Parks Team will work to ensure that as many of its sites are included in this scheme as soon as possible.

1.21 **Technical Services**

- 1.22 The Property and Estates Team identified the potential of photovoltaic cells and utilised the roof of the Civic Centre to generate energy which has reduced the reliance on the national grid and also provided an income from the generous 'feed in' tariffs available to early adopters.
- 1.23 The Environmental Health team has a statutory role to facilitate improvements in the energy efficiency of the housing across the district. This is usually complimentary to its work to reduce fuel poverty. On 6 February the Housing and Customer Services Working Group recommended the adoption of an Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Strategy (2020 to 2025). The primary objectives of the strategy are:
- To contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions in buildings to help meet the Government target of reaching 'net zero' by 2050.
 - To encourage and support the insulation of any remaining wall cavities and lofts in the district
 - To encourage and support the uptake of solid wall insulation in the district
 - To encourage and support the uptake of domestic renewable energy systems
 - To further improve the energy efficiency of the Council's own housing stock

- To target areas, known to contain Hard to Treat (HTT) dwellings – a dwelling that cannot accommodate ‘staple’ or cost-effective fabric energy efficiency measures
- To work towards reducing the number of people living in fuel poverty across West Sussex using both practical and behavioural measures
- To inform and enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the domestic private rental sector
- To work towards the Council’s strategic target of preparing Arun’s response to the Environment and Climate Emergency.

1.24 Cabinet adopted the Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Strategy on 9 March 2020 (Decision notice: C/045/090320). An example of the work undertaken by Environmental Health’s Private Sector Housing Team is the use of Better Care Funding to assist vulnerable residents of park home sites to have wall insulation installed on their homes. This obtains benefits in terms of both reducing carbon emissions and tackling fuel poverty.

1.25 **Residential Services**

1.26 Nationally, housing accounts for 18% of the UK’s carbon emissions. Social housing is a key stakeholder and the Residential Services team has ambitious plans to improve energy efficiency and where possible decarbonise the Council’s social housing stock. This is in accordance with the Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014 which set out a fuel poverty target to improve as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable so that they achieve a minimum energy performance rating of band C, by 2030.

1.27 To achieve this aim, the following strategies will be applied:

- a) Adopting carbon reduction strategies (e.g. retrofit with decarbonised or low carbon technologies, energy efficient new builds and review all operations)
- b) Introducing carbon offsetting schemes (e.g. using carbon positive technologies)
- c) Increasing resilience and adaptation (e.g. avoidance of flood risk and overheating)

1.28 HM Government has consulted on Future Homes Standard in 2019 which proposed changes to building regulations to help meet the net zero carbon target. One of the proposals is to not connect new homes to the gas network after 2025. If adopted, this will require Arun to identify an alternative to gas boilers for heating.

1.29 Residential Services has been gathering data for a number of years to assist in the planning of this work. It has Energy Performance Certificates for its properties and stock condition surveys. It now plans to model the condition of every home to identify which have an Energy Performance rating below C and what measures are needed to improve the home rating to achieve at least a band C rating.

1.30 **Planning**

1.31 Planning has a positive role to play in helping to address climate change. An existing duty under statute requires Planning Authorities to address climate change and

greenhouse gas reduction through development plan policies. The most significant legislation includes:

- Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, section 19 (1A) - requires Local Planning Authorities to include in their Local Plan “policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local Planning Authority’s area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change”.
- Planning & Energy Act 2008 – permits Local Authorities to impose reasonable requirements on developments to use a proportion of renewable energy, low carbon and decentralised sources of energy and the application of energy efficiency standards.
- Climate Change Act 2008 introduced the Governments stepped 5-year carbon budget targets to achieve 80% of 1990 levels by 2050 and established the Committee on Climate Change to advise on the delivery, the monitoring of targets and advise the Government on preparing for climate change and building a low carbon economy.

1.32 Planning Policy in the Local Plan sets out a whole raft of measures which include:

- creating sustainable communities through design policies
- securing energy efficient homes and businesses
- quality housing
- safe and healthy places and spaces that are resilient to climate change
- places and spaces which connect people to services, jobs and schools
- improved transport network including roads, but better walking and cycling routes that encourage active travel and healthy lifestyles whilst also reducing carbon emissions.

1.33 A Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document to support the Local Plan policies is currently at the public consultation stage and is nearing formal adoption. This will be used as a material consideration for negotiating detailed sustainable design quality in new development. The Local Plan will also be updated to include improved sustainable design standards to achieve this Councils target of zero carbon development by 2030 in response to the climate emergency.

1.34 **Community Wellbeing**

1.35 In 2016/17 the newly appointed leisure operator submitted proposals to improve the energy efficiency of the Arun Leisure Centre. This included:

- New Pool Air Handling Unit (AHU)
- New energy controls
- Plantroom Insulation
- Water management controls and grey water recycling
- High efficiency lighting and control
- Car Park Lighting

1.36 This initial work was followed by the installation of a new Air Handling Unit serving the older parts of the building. The combined results of installing more energy efficient

technologies resulted in the buildings Display Energy Certificates improving from an operational rating of C in 2016 (score of 53) to a B rating in 2019 (score of 45).

1.37 The Council is currently assessing the viability of installing decarbonisation technologies with HM Government Funding that will further reduce the Arun Leisure Centre's reliance on fossil fuels.

1.38 The Council's other significant leisure centre in terms of energy consumption is the Littlehampton Wave. This building was completed in 2019 and incorporates energy efficient plant and low carbon technologies such as combined heat and power (CHP) plant which generates electricity on site to meet the base load of the building and utilises the heat produced to maintain pool and ambient temperatures throughout the building. The building is also designed to maximise natural air circulation and has a range of energy efficient systems.

1.39 Climate Change and Sustainability Manager

1.40 The appointment of a Climate Change and Sustainability Manager is well underway and will be a key component in the Council's drive to become carbon neutral or positive. The role was advertised in September with the aim of the appointee starting in early 2021. Once appointed a full carbon audit will be conducted across the authority and the findings set out in a strategy document and action plan to achieve the goal of the Council being carbon neutral by 2030.

1.41 Conclusion

1.42 As an organisation Arun has demonstrated a social responsibility for the environment over many years. By appointing a Climate Change and Sustainability Manager Arun is demonstrating a renewed commitment to the environment. The role will build on the previous work and will cut across all departments of the Council to provide a systematic and cohesive response to the challenge of climate change. It will also provide guidance for partners, contractors and businesses to take action and be an ambassador to inform, educate and advise the community. Moreover, the Climate Change and Sustainability Manager will be required to challenge the status quo and persuade the Council and the community to undergo a transformation in the way we work and live our lives.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

That the Environment and Leisure Working Group note this report.

3. OPTIONS:

To consider further recommendations.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓

Other groups/persons (please specify)		✓
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		✓
Legal		✓
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability	✓	
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		✓
6. IMPLICATIONS:		

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:
Information paper

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:
Environment and Leisure Working Group minutes (November 2019)
[Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Strategy \(2020 to 2025\)](#)

Appendix 1 Wildflower Meadow Sites

Arundel Cemetery
Bersted Brooks
Bersted Park
Bognor Cemetery
Brookfield (x2)
Caffyn's Field
Chalcraft Cemetery
Felpham Recreation Ground
Ferring Green
Findon Cemetery
Flansham Lane
Giles Close, Yapton
Hotham Park
Langmeads Field
Little Twitern
Littlehampton Cemetery
Marina Gardens
Meadows Keep
Mewsbrook Park (x3)
Norfolk Gardens (x2)
Old Rectory Gardens
Old Rectory Gardens Woodland
Priory Road Pocket Park
West Fields
West Park