

Climate Change Review – harnessing a community call for action Overview & Scrutiny Commission

Reason for review

Addressing and mitigating man-made Climate Change, remains a key and overarching strategic objective of the council. ([Council Plan objective: protecting and enhancing our environment](#)).

Background

BFC, has committed itself to becoming carbon neutral by 2050, in line with Central Government policy. In its Motion 02/2019, on 17 July 2019, the council objective was set out, that:

“This Council strongly believes in the need to continue its work to address the impact of man-made Climate Change on our local communities. To this end, this Council asks the Executive to develop detailed action plans with measurable ambitious annual targets and an annual report to address this pressing matter to ensure that the Council meets the government target of eradicating its net contribution to climate change by 2050”

To meet this objective, the council’s draft Climate Change strategy has two strands. The first strand is focused on the emissions that the council generates itself, through its own activities. These are within its control, and it now has a firm [baseline](#) and clear milestone plan. However, the second strand, addresses the changes needed by the wider community; some of which the council can enable, but the majority needs the community itself, to change its behaviour and how on a personal level, it will turn the tide on climate negative activities.

Members have a strong community development role and also have the ability to be thought leaders and community champions. This review therefore will harness this in the furtherance of changing how individuals, households, communities, businesses and other affinity groups transform their behaviours from carbon producing, wasteful activities to those that have a positive climate impact and conserve the planet’s natural resources.

To this end, the Overview & Scrutiny Commission, has agreed to lead this important review, itself. The scope is based on the outputs from the [Commission’s Climate Market Place](#), held on 10 March 2020 and subsequent [Commission meeting](#), held on the same day. This landmark meeting included community stakeholders in reviewing council projects already in place, highlighted key areas of concern and made recommendations that now form the backbone of the new corporate strategy.

During the pandemic the Climate Change Review Group met and discussed potential projects which they believe address this second pillar of the strategy, and decided to prioritise: **reducing emissions in the community and improving air quality for all, improving [biodiversity](#) in the borough and engaging young people and facilitating their voices in setting our community objectives.**

The review group is aiming to make a tangible local impact, by raising awareness amongst residents and building the community capital that enables these objectives to be delivered. Capital that allows everyone to be involved and everyone to have influence.

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Objectives/scope

This review is specifically looking to identify:

- use of high emission transport throughout the borough and ways in which they can be decreased
- ways of increasing the air quality in pedestrianised areas
- how to raise awareness for residents to reduce the effects of climate change through their daily choices
- ways to influence Bracknell Forest businesses to reduce their carbon emissions

The review will do this by:

- Investigating the possibility of a traffic free day in Crowthorne High Street to assess the difference in air quality from a 'usual' day
- Investigating whether a 20mph speed limit outside schools would reduce pollution levels for pedestrians
- Consulting residents about a range of incentives aimed at encouraging active travel (walking and cycling)
- Consulting environmental experts about how the Council can increase air quality in the borough
- Consulting residents, specifically young people and commuters, on their transport use and what would encourage them to use active travel (walking and cycling)
- Carrying out a desktop analysis on the impact of Coronavirus on residents commuting habits and how much of this change is permanent

At the conclusion of this work the Review Group will produce a report highlighting its findings and propose recommendations to the Executive about how the Council, its partners and private companies in the borough can work towards goals that will help the Council to achieve its aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

Delivery methods: Challenge sessions; interviewing climate change and transport experts; interviewing local residents and desktop analysis of emissions data

Council theme: Climate Change

Council team: Delivery

Review due: February 2021

Proposed by: Cllr Tony Virgo, Vice-Chair Overview & Scrutiny Commission

Equalities Impact Assessment

It is recognised that any recommendations on Climate Change may have wide ranging implications for residents from different demographic backgrounds. For example, a car may be the most effective mode of transport for some individuals who cannot use public transport or walk due to cost, disability or time constraints.. Members of the Panel will take into account these considerations and any impact on those with protected characteristics, and how they impact on service delivery, when undertaking its review and flag any issues it discovers as part of its key findings. EIA initial screening to be completed.

Financial and legal implications

There are potentially legal and financial implications of any recommendations arising from this review which will be fully addressed in the review report.

Climate Change implications

On 1 May 2019 the UK became the world's first national Parliament to declare a climate

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change emergency. Since then, the government, along with local authorities, partners and local community groups have pledged to tackle the impact of climate change in their local areas.

The Climate Change Act (2008) (and subsequent amendment) set out the government's ambition to reduce carbon emissions to at least 80% lower than 1990 levels by 2050.ⁱ Data produced by DEFRA indicates that the three largest areas of CO₂ emissions in Bracknell Forest are; industry and commerce, domestic use and transport. Between 2005 – 2018 industry and commerce and domestic carbon emissions had reduced significantly whereas transport had stagnated with very little reduction seen over a 13-year period.

ⁱ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>