

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Journey to Net Zero - Climate Change Culture and Behaviours

**Date:** 6 October 2022

**Author:** Climate Change Officer & Food Health and Housing Manager

**Wards Affected** None

### **Purpose**

To update members on the measures taken to promote and enhance a positive culture throughout the organisation in relation to climate change and to seek approval of an Environmental policy Statement demonstrating the Council's commitment to deliver on the Carbon Management Strategy and zero carbon emission targets.

### **Key Decision**

No

### **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT Cabinet:**

- 1. Notes the actions currently being taken to address organisational culture in respect of climate change.**
- 2. Approves the Environmental Policy Statement at Appendix A.**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1** In February 2018 Gedling Borough Council became a plastic clever council and introduced a corporate working group to phase out the use of single use plastic products.
- 1.2** In November 2019 the council declared a climate emergency and made a pledge to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Since this date the corporate plastic clever group refocussed its attention to co-ordinate corporate environmental and sustainability actions, projects and initiatives.
- 1.3** On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 UK Government announced it "will set the world's most ambitious climate change target" to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. The Climate Change Act 2008 committed to an

80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990. The act was amended in 2019 to increase the commitment to 100% reductions in emissions by 2050 also known as 'net zero'.

- 1.4 In October 2021 the council adopted a draft Carbon Management Strategy and action plan which was subject to a public consultation to seek views from stakeholders before adopting the final version in March 2022. The Council has recently employed a new corporate Climate Change Officer and has set aside a corporate capital budget for climate change work. The strategy and action plan lists over a 100 initiatives and programmes of work to ensure the Council and community achieve net zero Carbon emissions by 2030. The Climate Change Officer has undertaken a series of meetings with Heads of Service to go through actions within the Carbon Management Strategy relevant to individual service areas to support implementation and timescales for delivery.
- 1.5 In order to achieve the Council's targets, cultural and behaviour change within the Council is integral for success going forward. A number of proposals to facilitate this change have been taken to Senior Leadership team and are currently being progressed, the proposals include the following:
  - Changes to the Gedling Employee/Manager/Leader Standards to include the following: "***will behave in a way that protects the environment and enhances the environment for present and future generations***". This change requires consultation through the unions and would ultimately be approved by the Head of Paid Service. This change to behavioural standards demonstrates the commitment the organisation and its staff would make to enhance the environment.
  - Inclusion of a specific section in performance development review (PDR) forms for staff to suggest initiatives to support the Council's targets in respect of climate change. PDRs are conducted annually for all employees and inclusion of this section would enable staff initiatives to be identified and progressed where appropriate.
  - The provision of Carbon Literacy Training to members, Senior Leadership team, Heads of Service and Managers (provided September 2022) with further corporate online training to be developed for all staff and included as part of the induction process for new starters.
  - The creation of a corporate Environmental group chaired by the Director responsible for Environment to assist delivery of the Council's targets in respect of climate change.
- 1.6 In addition to the measures listed above, the Climate Change Officer has worked with Senior Leadership team and Heads of Service to develop an Environmental Policy Statement. This statement is intended to

demonstrate how the Council's commitment to fulfil its ambitions in relation to zero carbon emissions and delivery of the Carbon management Strategy. The document also sets out how the Council will embed a culture within the organisation that sets climate change as a priority. The document has been prepared in consultation with Directors and Heads of Service and demonstrates how the organisation will commit to tackle climate change through provision of services and functions.

- 1.7 The council has shown in its response to the coronavirus pandemic that in a crisis resources can be mobilised to protect public health. The council has developed a reputation as a leading district council during the pandemic. There are many lessons to be learnt from the pandemic and one key strength is that through effective team work and good communication successful outcomes can be achieved. The climate crisis is regarded as one of the greatest threats to public health and urgent action is required from everyone to reduce man-made greenhouse gas emissions. The Environmental Policy Statement sets out the Council's stance and commitment to change for the benefit of all who work and live in the borough.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that cabinet note the work already in progress in relation to delivery of the Carbon management Strategy and implementation of culture change across the organisation including the actions underway in relation to behavioural standards, training and the establishment of a corporate environmental group.
- 2.2 Members approve the Environmental Policy Statement at Appendix A which sets out the organisations approach to climate change. At appendix B, by way of guidance only, some practical steps resulting from the policy statement have been shown to demonstrate how the commitment will be put into practice.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Members could chose not to approve this policy statement or consider alternative commitments. This statement has been drafted in consultation with SLT and Heads of Service and is considered realistic but still proactive in terms of demonstrating the Council's commitment to deliver on the ambitious target of net zero by 2030.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The costs of the actions being taken to address organisational culture in respect of climate change as set out in the report are expected to be met from existing budgets. Should additional budget be required then the necessary approval would be sought.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Although currently there are no direct legal obligations on the council to change its behaviour and culture to tackle climate change the council has voluntarily pledged to achieve net zero by 2030 and declared a climate emergency. Whilst these are not legally binding ambitions the Policy Statement does demonstrate the Council's commitment to deliver on its targets and gives staff clarity around how the Council is expected to deliver services.

Consultation with the public is not a statutory requirement and as this policy relates to the organisational stance, consultation was undertaken internally prior to presentation to members.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 There are no negative benefits identified from this report and the benefits accrued are expected to have a positive impact for many protected characteristics from an equalities perspective. See equalities impact assessment in Appendix C.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 Climate change is one of the greatest threats to the human race and ecosystems and if humans do not change their behaviour and reduce the use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions the impact on society will be catastrophic. The greatest impacts will be felt in poorer and developing countries which in a global economy will be felt in Gedling were many of our residents rely on imported goods and services. Gedling residents will feel direct effects of climate change through extreme weather events e.g. floods or droughts which can have a direct impact. Lower income households may struggle with financing goods and services.

The recommendations of this report are likely to have a positive impact on the wider environmental culture at the council and it is envisaged through raised awareness and embedding a corporate approach that the council will take steps to adopt sustainable practices and reduce its long term impact on the environment. Without a corporate change in approach and behaviour it is unlikely the council would achieve net zero by 2030.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix A – Corporate Environmental Policy Statement.

Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment

## **9 Background Papers**

### **9.1 Carbon Management Strategy**

## **10 Reasons for Decision**

- 10.1 To demonstrate the council's commitment to delivery of climate change targets and to provide staff and residents with assurance on the Council's position.

### **Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**