

## COUNTY COUNCIL – 05 NOVEMBER 2019

### THE LEADER'S UPDATE ON THE MOTION ON CLIMATE ACTION

#### Report by Director for Planning & Place

#### RECOMMENDATION

Council is **RECOMMENDED** to note the update from the Leader on the action taken in pursuant to the Motion in April 2019 on Climate action and to note process for taking the further recommendations forward.

#### Background

1. At its Meeting on 2 April 2019, Council approved a motion in the following terms:

*The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in their October report stated that if the planet wants to avert dangerous climate breakdown, we need to cut emissions in half by 2030, and hit zero by the middle of the century.*

*Oxfordshire is already doing its bit: we are committed to reducing emissions from our own estate and activities by 3% a year. Unfortunately, our current plans are not enough. The IPCC's report suggests that the world has just a dozen years left to restrict global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Should they increase by 2°C, humanity's capacity to prevent catastrophic food shortages, floods, droughts, extreme heat and poverty will be severely impaired. Limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible, but only with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities. Furthermore, bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities.*

*Oxfordshire County Council calls on the Leader to:*

1. *Acknowledge a 'Climate Emergency' and call for action*
2. *Pledge to make Oxfordshire County Council carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;*
3. *Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;*
4. *Continue to work with partners across the county and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies;*
5. *Report to Council within six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency."*

## Update to Council

2. Oxfordshire County Council has a strong track record of work on the climate change agenda both in the community and for its own operations. This includes:
  - Emissions reduced by 41% across our corporate estate from 2010; we have retrofitted streetlighting, our buildings and improved ICT.
  - Supported the establishment of Low Carbon Hub through the Oxfutures1 project; an award-winning community energy organisation delivering a step-changed in locally owned, community financed renewables in the County and supporting Solar on our schools.
  - Worked with partners to agree an Oxfordshire Energy Strategy that pitches an ambitious reduction in emissions of 50% of countywide emissions by 2030<sup>1</sup>.
  - Supported residents through the Affordable Warmth network.
  - Partnered with academia and business delivering transport and energy innovation on the ground in Oxfordshire; including vehicle to grid charging, smart charging network, connected and autonomous vehicle trials, supporting establishing hydrogen hub.
  - Funded growing a network of Community Action Groups over 18 years; now the largest network of its kind in the UK, empowering action in our communities.
  - Introduced the world's first zero emissions zone, and additional congestion management plans.
  - Continued to deliver outstanding waste management services; rated the best county council in the UK for recycling in 2019.
  - Agreed an Active and Healthy Travel Strategy, improving health, reducing carbon and improving air quality.
  
3. Since the adoption of the Motion, the Leader of the Council, with the approval of the Political Group Leaders, has set up a Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) to develop a Climate Action Strategy. Representatives from Voice of Oxfordshire's Youth and Community Action Groups are attending and will give valuable input. Terms of reference are set out in Annex 1.

## Our approach

4. Acknowledging the Climate Emergency has allowed us to review our current work and agree a new approach. We have committed to take action across all our five main areas of influence:

<i>Your Council:</i>	<i>Deliver a carbon neutral County Council by 2030</i>
<i>Our Schools:</i>	<i>Enable schools to decarbonise their estate</i>
<i>Our Supply Chain:</i>	<i>Green our supply chain</i>

---

<sup>1</sup> against 2008 levels.

*Our County: Make policy making Climate focussed*  
*Our Partners: Innovate, collaborate and support communities*

5. Delivering this new ambition takes us well beyond our current ways of working both in pace and breadth. It requires transformational change to the way we do business across every service area within the council. It will require new kinds of relationships with our supply chain and countywide partners and in supporting our communities to make change.
6. Climate change presents both international and local threats. Our response is aimed at contributing to the global effort needed to limit the most dangerous consequences of global warming. However, leading with a strong local response will also bring real additional benefits to residents including:
  - **Improved health and well-being** through more active travel
  - **Improved air quality** through modal shift and electrification of vehicles
  - **Economic benefit:** Potential to add £1.35 billion annually to the Oxfordshire economy and create 11,000 jobs through a high ambition approach to decarbonisation<sup>2</sup>.

### **Zero-carbon commitment**

7. The council has measured and reported its direct carbon footprint for many years for:
  - 60,000 streetlights, pumps, illuminated signs and traffic signals
  - 4.5 million business miles per year
  - 500 fleet vehicles including fire engines
  - Circa 100 buildings the council occupies to deliver services
8. Making a commitment to become carbon neutral across this footprint by 2030 is both bold and ambitious.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Oxfordshire Low Carbon Economy report](#) 2015 potential economic value of high ambition on low carbon

**Next Steps**

9. The CAG will continue to meet to review each element of the programme set out above, advise on our emerging plans for each area and recommend a costed strategy to Cabinet.
10. In tandem, resource requirements are being worked up for the forthcoming budget setting process to support immediate delivery.

**SUSAN HALLIWELL**  
Director for Planning & Place

October 2019

## **Annex 1: Climate Action Cabinet Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

The Leader, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, agreed the following terms of Reference:

The Climate Action CAG will comprise a group of a minimum of 7 councillors. The Chair will be the Cabinet Member for Environment; and Deputy Chair the Cabinet Member for Transformation. The group will meet monthly from September 2019 to consider and provide advice to Cabinet on major environmental issues. During the first six months the priority topic for consideration will be:

- Climate Action - how Oxfordshire County Council responds to the motion agreed by Full Council to acknowledge a climate emergency
- Support the development of an action plan to be recommended to Cabinet.
- Review relevant county council strategies and policies to support Climate Action.