

Cabinet

28 July 2020

Draft Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy for Public Consultation

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr R Bryan, Highways, Travel and Environment

Local Councillor(s): County Wide

Executive Director: John Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

Report Author: Antony Littlechild
Title: Sustainability Manager
Tel: 01305 224802
Email: antony.littlechild@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

To approve the DRAFT Dorset Council climate and ecological emergency strategy for consultation with the public following the development of a costed delivery plan.

Reason for Recommendation:

1. Executive Summary

Dorset Council have declared a climate & ecological emergency and established a councillor led Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) responsible for gathering information and working with officers to make recommendations to Dorset Council's Cabinet on actions that will help mitigate against climate change.

The EAP has overseen the development of a draft Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy ready for consultation with the public. The strategy is attached as Appendix A. A detailed costed delivery plan is also being developed for consideration by the Cabinet in October prior to public consultation.

The strategy highlights the importance of engaging with the wider public and key stakeholders and as part of the strategy development we sought views from the public through a 'call for ideas'. This received over 780 responses, summarised in pages 53 to 56 of the strategy, and 32 organisations or individuals were invited to present at one of two inquiry days sessions. In addition, young people were invited to share their views and a specific event was held for town and parish councils. The key themes identified through this engagement have been fed into the strategy and the more detailed responses will be further considered in the development of the delivery plan.

It is proposed to consult the public on the draft strategy and delivery plan together later this year. The final strategy and costed delivery plan will take account of the views of the public and interested parties and will be presented for consideration by cabinet early next year. It is intended that this consultation process will run for a period of approximately eight weeks and will follow the gunning principles ensuring it is accessible to all and widely published and promoted to ensure a good response. Further engagement activities will be developed as the strategy is delivered.

2. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report. However initial modelling suggests that implementing the strategy could cost over £100M over the next 20 years. Further details will be provided in October as part of the costed delivery plan. This will set out detailed actions required to deliver against the strategy with associated costs and budget requirements for consideration within the short- and medium-term financial planning processes.

The strategy illustrates it will be possible to tackle some projects in the short to medium term and combine carbon-reducing actions with other service priorities. By re-purposing existing service budgets, the council can place climate change response at the centre of our budget making processes. To achieve the ambitious targets set out however there will still be a need for imaginative and innovative solutions working in partnership with central government and the private and community sectors to lever in the resources required.

3. Climate implications

The specific purpose of this report and the strategy is to present Dorset Councils overall approach to the climate and ecological emergency. The overall principle behind the strategy is to set out key areas where Dorset Council will need to take action to directly reduce carbon emissions from its own operations to become a carbon neutral Council by 2040 and by working in partnership to help Dorset residents and organisations achieve a wider carbon neutral Dorset County by 2050.

4. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this report, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low

Due to the known high level of public interest in the Climate Change Agenda and the previous commitment to provide opportunity for the public to comment on the draft strategy to not undertake a public consultation presents a medium level of reputational risk.

5. Equalities Impact Assessment

An EqIA is being developed for the strategy but requires input from the results of the public consultation and then screening against the final strategy document. Consultation will aim to reach all sections of society and a good population balance using a variety of methods. Responses will be monitored during consultation and communications methods altered accordingly to encourage contributions from across the community.

6. Appendices

- a) Dorset Council Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy – Draft for consultation

7. Background Papers

Each summary technical section within the strategy (pages 25 -48) has a live link to more detailed technical background papers. Links for each paper are below:

- Buildings - www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-emergency/documents/strategy-technical-papers/buildings-and-built-assets-technical-paper.pdf
- Food & Drink - www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-emergency/documents/strategy-technical-papers/food-and-drink-technical-paper.pdf
- Economy - www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-emergency/documents/strategy-technical-papers/low-carbon-economy-technical-paper.pdf
- Natural Assets - www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-emergency/documents/strategy-technical-papers/natural-assets-technical-paper.pdf
- Renewable Energy - www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-emergency/documents/strategy-technical-papers/renewable-energy-technical-paper.pdf

- Transport - www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-emergency/documents/strategy-technical-papers/transport-technical-paper.pdf
- Waste - www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-emergency/documents/strategy-technical-papers/waste-technical-paper.pdf
- Water - www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/climate-emergency/documents/strategy-technical-papers/water-technical-paper.pdf

8. Strategy background and key points

- 8.1 To develop this strategy a considerable amount of investigative work has been undertaken by officers to understand the scale of the challenge ahead and the issues, opportunities and constraints we face in taking action. This background work has been used to develop a strategy that is realistic and deliverable supported by more detailed discussion papers. These are provided as links within the strategy document and provided as background papers to this report.
- 8.2 Overall the strategy sets out the general direction of travel needed. It recognises that Dorset Council has only limited powers and responsibilities in many of the areas where action is required. Organisations and individuals will all need to act collectively to achieve the wider ambitions of the strategy. A great deal of support will also be required from central government through changes in policy, guidance and finance and the Council has a key role to lobby for these changes.
- 8.3 The Council has a number of ways it can take action which are set out in the strategy –
- **Direct Action** – showing leadership by reducing carbon emissions from its operations and become a carbon-neutral Council by 2040.
 - **Indirect Action** - to help facilitate the changes required to work towards the whole of Dorset becoming carbon-neutral by 2050, by ensuring that our services are delivered in a way that supports our journey towards a Carbon Neutral County.
 - **Partnership** - by working in partnership with other organisations and communities to drive change across the County and put in place larger programmes and projects to support fundamental change required.
- 8.4 Eight topic areas (renewable energy, buildings and assets, food and drink, economy, waste, water, natural assets, transport), are discussed in the strategy (pages 23-48) and the supporting discussion papers. Each section provides a summary of the discussion documents and sets out key areas of action. These topics will be used to frame the delivery plan.
- 8.5 Dorset Council have placed the Climate and Ecological Emergency at the heart of its Corporate Plan. It is a complex multi-faceted topic requiring

action across the whole range of Council services to be fully embedded within the workings of the organisation. The strategy document provides a framework for services to integrate our response to the climate emergency into service planning. The Council will need to ensure

- Governance and resources are in place to deliver the strategy, building it in to service delivery and key policies and plans.
- The Government is lobbied for changes to policy and financial support
- Engagement and communication is strengthened with other organisations and the public to raise awareness, support community action and engage with key stakeholders
- Progress is monitored against the strategy targets, carbon budgets delivery plan and regularly reported within the Council and to the wider community.

8.6 Mitigating climate change by reducing carbon emissions is a critical aspect of tackling the climate emergency but is only one aspect of this work. The need to adapt to current and future climate change and the key relationship between climate and the ecology are vitally important. The strategy recognises the need for an integral approach between adaptation, wider sustainability issues and ecology.

8.7 Taking action will also have a number of significant co-benefits and can help to support and strengthen Dorset's local economy and address social issues, such as fuel poverty and inequality. This is in addition to having wider benefits for health and mental wellbeing, such as improving air quality, encouraging active travel, access to greenspace and encouraging healthy diets.

9. Conclusion

9.1 The draft strategy presented today sets out how Dorset Council can achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 and play our part in the recovery and enhance our natural environment. The strategy is ambitious but deliverable. The proposed direct and indirect actions and other opportunities will be developed in more detail as part of a costed delivery plan which will be presented to Cabinet in October prior to public consultation.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.