

## For General Release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET - 7 February 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Sarah Hayward, Interim Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery Steve Iles, Director of Sustainable Communities</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Muhammad Ali Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2021-2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>We will live within our means, balance the books and provide value for money for our residents.</i></li></ul> <p>The council's suggested approach in furthering work to reduce carbon emissions is very conscious of the need for the council to remain within budget. The work on energy efficiency in homes will help to reduce fuel poverty and work on improving air quality in the borough will help to tackle the underlying causes of environmental injustice and keep streets clean and safe.</p> <p><a href="#">Council's priorities</a></p>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b> <p>Financial impacts arising from the recommendations of this report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>The draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan and the delivery of its actions and outputs will be financed via identified S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies, use of the Capital programme as and when appropriate, and by national and regional funding streams available to the public sector.</i></li></ul>	
<b>FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: 1222CAB</b>	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below.

### 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to

- 1.1 Consider the progress made in the creation of the appended draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan, the scope and scale of detail contained within the Plan and the associated delivery timetable.
- 1.2 Approve the adoption of the draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan, appendix 1 to this report and acknowledge that the plan is a 'live document' which will be updated on an ongoing basis following reports to Members for

approval.

- 1.3 Agree to receive an annual report on the Plan and track progress on delivering actions outlined in the proposed Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan to achieve its ambition of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.4 Note the steps that the Council has taken, and the approach it intends to take, to identify resources and progress funding streams for the delivery of draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan in response to the Climate Emergency commission's recommendations.
- 1.5 Note the proposed allocation of £1.1M from the CIL Local Meaningful Proportion to finance the Sustainable Croydon initiatives split equally over 2022/23 and 2023/24 which is currently being assessed via internal processes.

## **2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Climate change is the single most important challenge facing us all. Our response to the climate emergency will form a key element of the Council's focus, with cross-cutting and pan-departmental themes that align with each of our key objectives. This report serves as an update on the progress made since the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission's report was approved at the June 2021 Cabinet meeting.
- 2.2 The Council declared a climate change and ecological emergency in July 2019 and Cabinet agreed that the Council would become carbon neutral by 2030. A wide range of actions have already been undertaken in Croydon to combat climate change, details of which are in the appended action plan and paragraph 4.3 below.
- 2.3 Compared to the other London boroughs, Croydon's emissions are above the median. The Council is committed to deliver as many of the Commission's recommendations as possible and these recommendations form the basis of the Action Plan.
- 2.4 The Council recognises that the Climate Emergency is a significant threat to our planet and accepts that it needs to both act and provide leadership at the local level to mitigate the effects of this global crisis. It is also the Council's ambition to play a key leadership and influencer role at both a regional and national level to ensure that policies are in place to deliver meaningful action at the scale and pace that is required.
- 2.5 There are multiple benefits to be gained from measures to reduce carbon emissions: lower energy costs, warmer homes and a lower carbon footprint can go hand in hand; measures to reduce traffic and increase active travel reduce air pollution and improve health. The Council is committed to drive a green economic recovery by identifying green jobs in Croydon and enabling local people to gain the skills needed and access them, and by working with local anchor institutions, such as colleges and NHS trusts, to buy more goods and services from local suppliers.

- 2.5 On its own, the Council cannot achieve the scale of change required in the borough. It will therefore build a broad alliance of partners to address the climate and ecological crisis together, involving residents, unions, businesses, civil society organisations, further education and skills providers, and other anchor organisations.

### **3 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The report also highlights that 70% of all carbon emissions in Croydon are associated with transport and homes. Whilst the Council has made progress in some areas, particularly through the implementation of the healthy streets & neighbourhoods, school streets and cycling schemes, significantly more needs to be done in order to make impactful reductions in the emissions from these sources.
- 3.2 In 2019 domestic emission sources in Croydon, notably heating and powering homes, made up approximately 46% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Croydon – and without action, this share is expected to increase to 60%. Transport emissions made up approximately 24%, and industry and commercial emissions made up approximately 30% of the borough's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Not including consumption emissions, Croydon's current rate of carbon emissions is estimated at around 1.08 million tonnes (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents) per year.
- 3.3 Croydon Council declared a climate change and ecological emergency on 15 July 2019 and set a target for the Council to become carbon neutral by 2030 (minute item 53/19). The Croydon Climate Crisis Commission was launched in March 2020 and its report was presented to Cabinet in June 2021.
- 3.4 The vision of the Council is to drive rapid reductions in the carbon emissions from activities in the borough of Croydon, with the intention of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The Council aims to ensure the transition to carbon neutral happens in a fair and just way, providing good quality jobs, improving wellbeing, and reducing inequality.
- 3.5 A key cross-cutting theme of the Commission's report relates to behaviour change and collective action working in collaboration with key strategic partners. The Council recognises the need for collective action to be taken by all residents and businesses in order to achieve the carbon neutral ambition. The Council also recognises that a failure to tackle the Climate Emergency will disproportionately impact on some groups. Younger people are adversely affected by climate change because they will feel the heightened effects of future climate change alongside the current impacts. They are also less likely to be in positions of decision making in relation to the climate, such as in government on policy development. Part of the council long-term ambition is to ensure children and young people have the necessary skills and opportunity to make an effective contribution to the climate change agenda.
- 3.6 Acknowledging the impact of climate change on our future generation and to ensure young people and schools are part of our response to this challenges we will be working with schools on tree planting under the first Croydon Schools Tree Giveaway initiative.

## **4 Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan Creation and Detail**

4.1 The appended draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan has been created using the 5 priority areas identified in the Croydon Climate Commission report, namely;

- 1. Getting the groundwork right**
- 2. Driving a green economic recovery**
- 3. Greening our Neighbourhoods**
- 4. Getting people and businesses involved**
- 5. Achieving the scale of change**

4.2 Of key importance is the need to prioritise the above actions in terms of need and deliverability of individual and cross cutting actions as well identifying immediate actions and those requiring a longer term view. An annual work programme will be created and delivered each year with an initial focus on;

- a. Development and implementation of Healthy Neighbourhoods and similar initiatives once funding from TfL is confirmed;
- b. Reducing corporate emissions, including from schools, through the planned capital and maintenance investment and considering carbon neutral ambitions in the up-coming Housing Asset strategy and business plan;
- c. De-carbonising the Council's supply chain by integrating carbon neutrality ambitions in our procurement policies;
- d. Delivery of grant funded works and development of further 'shovel-ready' projects for the corporate estate
- e. Developing a borough wide behaviour change programme engaging with residents, schools, businesses and other strategic and operational delivery partners

4.3 It should be noted that the Council has already taken steps to tackle the Climate Emergency as part of existing plans for service delivery and details of these existing work streams, programmes and projects are included within the draft action plan, Appendix 1. Some of the headline work streams include:

- a) An emission based parking policy was launched in 2019.
- b) Officers will publish an updated Air Quality Action Plan in 2022.
- c) 3,500 trees will be planted by end of 2022.
- d) 124 properties in council housing benefiting from ground source heatpumps.
- e) During 20/21, £729k was spent on campaigns for healthy school neighbourhoods and healthy neighbourhoods.
- f) Since 2016, over 38km of cycle lanes have been installed.
- g) There are 42 cycle hangers across the borough.
- h) Between 2018-20, 828 home visits to fuel impoverished residents were carried out, delivering 5,600 small energy savings measures.
- i) 400 electric vehicle charge points are to be installed by end of 2022.

## **5 RESOURCING THE DELIVERY PLAN**

5.1 Key to the success of delivering the desired outcomes and aspirations of the Plan is the ability of the Council to identify sufficient physical and intellectual resources to enable its progression and delivery.

- 5.2 To this end, the Environmental Services section has been working with colleagues within the Human Resources department and have secured the time-limited placement of a dedicated programme and project officer via the National Graduate Development Programme.
- 5.3 A key risk identified with the proposals in the draft plan is new and additional staffing resources to allow for the progression and delivery of this draft Plan for its term. Currently Climate mitigation and adaptation work is being carried out in disparate council departments and service areas and a cohesive team needs to be created and properly resourced to ensure that outputs and actions are delivered on a more corporate basis. To this end, the draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan (appendix 1), identifies the minimum proposed resource – a Carbon Neutral Programme Manager – to be implemented, whose role will include ensuring suitable governance procedures are implemented and adhered to.

## **6 FUNDING THE DELIVERY PLAN**

- 6.1 A range of national and regional funding programmes are available, some of which the Council has already accessed, that could potentially support the implementation of recommendations from this report. It is important the council avails future grant funding opportunities where available from central government or Mayor of London.
- 6.2 On top of external funding, existing capital and maintenance funding, through this paper we are seeking approval for £1.1m funding from CIL and s106 funding streams for the purpose of climate mitigation and adaptation projects and programmes being delivered across the council. These monies can also be used to provide match funding requirements on external funding streams and initiatives where necessary. The capital funding programme will also be used to ensure that all capital projects consider and include mitigation measures on all future spends and approvals where appropriate. Some of this funding will also be available to community organisations and schools to bid for under the *Sustainable Croydon Fund* to deliver small scale climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. Further details will be reported to members in due course.
- 6.3 We will also explore how our partners may contribute to the borough-wide effort to address the climate and ecological crisis by attracting funding from other sources not available to the Council, such as sponsorship, loans from the UK Infrastructure Bank, or ethical green financing. Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations can access government funding specifically for the sector, such as the Community Ownership Fund announced in the budget.

## **7 ESTABLISHING WIDER NETWORKS**

- 7.1 To date, officers responsible for the creation of the action plan have established close working relationships with local and regional partner peer organisations, especially London Councils. This has enabled access to the climate change toolkit for boroughs designed to amplify boroughs' work around climate change (particularly in pre and during COP26 – the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2021) and ensure common messages around net zero/climate change. The toolkit includes links to the #BeTheSolution branding assets available for use, information on some of the COP events that boroughs might

like to reference in their local activities, and London-wide lines on local government's role in achieving net zero, retrofitting homes, green investment and transport infrastructure.

7.2 This improved contact also allows access to several special interest groups concentrating on specific actions and key areas within the Plan. These areas include;

- Low Carbon Retrofit
- Low Carbon Transport
- Consumption Modelling
- Green Economy
- Communications and Public Engagement

7.3 Officers continue to seek peer partner organisations and this would be a priority of the new officer resource responsible for the progression of this Plan, assuming full approval of this recruitment is secured.

## **8 COMMUNICATING THE PLAN**

8.1 Assuming approval of the draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan and the prioritisation of actions detailed within the plan, the programme manager would engage with communications colleagues to develop a communication and public engagement strategy to ensure the Plan is fully communicated in a timely and understandable manner. Key messages will need to be created as part of this strategy to ensure actions and requirements are understood by all stakeholders namely, internal council departments, council staff, council residents, commercial organisations, schools and community groups, neighbouring authorities, regional and national government departments.

## **9 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

9.1 The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission to the Scrutiny Streets, Environment and Homes Sub-Committee in September 2020. The final report of the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission was then taken to Cabinet and approved in June 2021. This presented draft Carbon Neutral Action Plan has evolved from the final report.

9.2 The proposed Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan has not yet been taken to a Scrutiny meeting, however the ongoing delivery and development of the plan will form part of the scrutiny process going forward.

## **10 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

10.1 The report recommends use of CIL local meaningful proportion funding for the next two financial years. During this time the council will explore and aim to secure longer term funding for this work.

10.2 Projects and programmes on the existing capital programme will be reviewed so that carbon neutrality ambitions can be delivered within existing financial provision and any additional external funding allocations.

Approved: by Gerry Glover, Interim Head of Finance, Sustainable Communities, dated 26/01/2022.

## **11 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments that the Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK government to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Act provides for the setting of legally binding 'carbon budgets'. The Act also puts in place a policy and strategy framework in the UK to promote adaptation to climate change in five yearly cycles. The Government has pledged to introduce a legally binding target for the UK to have net zero greenhouse gas emissions.
- 11.2 The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 make provision in respect of ambient air quality assessment and management, limits for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air, limit values for benzene and carbon monoxide in ambient air, and relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air. Their purpose was to transpose into English law, various EU directives pertaining to air quality and they currently remain in force.
- 11.3 In January 2018 the government published a 25 Year Environment Plan which sets out the government's goals for improving the environment within a generation. The Plan's broad goals are clean air, clean and plentiful water, thriving plants and wildlife, a reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought, using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently, enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, minimising waste, managing exposure to chemicals and enhancing biosecurity.
- 11.4 In May 2018 under changes made by the Localism Act 2011 to the Greater London Authority Act 1999 ('GLA Act') the Mayor of London published a London Environment Strategy. Section 351A of the GLA Act provides that the Strategy must contain provisions dealing with the Mayor's policies and proposals in relation to each of the following matters in relation to Greater London — biodiversity, municipal waste management, climate change mitigation and energy, adaptation to climate change, air quality and ambient noise. The London Environment Strategy also contains a general assessment of London's environment. In addition, the GLA Act also requires environmental policy to be reflected in other strategies published by the Mayor such as the London Plan, the Transport Strategy and the Police and Crime Plan.
- 11.5 In relation to air quality the Council must have regard to the air quality provisions within the Mayor's London Environment Strategy when exercising its local air quality management functions.
- 11.6 The Environment Act 2021 focusses on protecting and enhancing the environment through regulating improvement of air and water quality, tackling waste, increasing recycling, and improving the natural environment. In particular, legally binding targets will be set for the following core areas: waste and recycling, clean air, nature, and water. The Act also establishes of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP). The OEP will now hold governmental and public bodies to account on their environmental obligations. Section 80 of the

Environment Act 1985 as amended by the Environment Act 2021 requires Councils to have regard to the national air quality strategy when exercising any function of a public nature that could affect the quality of air.

- 11.7 In seeking to properly scope and implement the numerous proposals within the draft Plan appended to this report, officers will need to separately seek legal advice regarding the risks and implications of implementation of the proposals as these are not addressed within the draft plan document. In addition, steps will need to be taken to ensure statutory compliance with the various requirements of the proposals which may include in relation to statutory consultation and notification, equalities impact assessments and compliance with the public sector equality duty, consideration of data protection implications and placing the necessary information before decision makers to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements in relation to such decisions are adhered to. In addition, officers responsible for seeking to implement the plan will need to ensure that appropriate budgetary arrangements are agreed and approved in advance in relation to all matters which will require financial commitment by the Council. Any grant funding arrangements and agreements will need to be assessed for implications and risks and officers seeking to utilise or indeed distribute grant funding will need to ensure adherence to the contractual grant requirements as well as relevant matters such as subsidy control. Additional legal advice will be required in relation to such matters.
- 11.8 Finally in relation to any proposed review or amendment to existing Council strategies, policies and plans to align with the ambitions in this report and the appended Plan: Members will be aware that many policies and strategies of the Council are governed by statutory parameters and statutory guidance and the Council must adhere to those in formulating any suggestions in this regard or in undertaking any reviews of such policies, plans or strategies. The Council also has a policy framework of strategies, plans and policies which may only be approved, revised or updated by Full Council.

Approved by Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law, on behalf of the Interim Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer

## **12 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 12.1 This report and the appended plan make the recommendation that the council needs to implement a reasonable staff resource if the council is to be able to deliver the action plan. For an initial two year period, the role of a Carbon Neutral Programme Manager is proposed, which would be funded from allocations within the capital programme.
- 12.2 The recruitment of additional resource has been highlighted in this report and this will be managed under the Council's Recruitment and Retention Policy and Procedure.
- 12.3 If any other HR issues arise these will be managed in the normal way under Council's Policies and Procedures.

Approved: by Jennifer Sankar, Head of HR Housing Directorate & Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery Directorate, for and on behalf of Dean Shoosmith, Interim Chief People Officer, dated 26/01/2022.

### **13 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 13.1 While climate change will impact everyone, people who are more socially vulnerable could potentially experience a greater impact from its effects. Relevant factors include age and health, the quality of housing and proximity to green space, and social and institutional factors, such as inequality, social capital and social cohesion. People with limited mobility, older people, people with poor health, people living in disadvantaged areas and from Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups are therefore likely to be more impacted. Further detail on this is available the equality analysis form, appendix 2.
- 13.2 The Carbon Neutral Action Plan aims to assist the adaptation to climate change as well as reduce carbon emissions. They are designed to ensure that the transition to carbon neutrality happens in a fair and just way, improving wellbeing, reducing inequality and providing good quality jobs for individuals currently working in low-skilled work sector. They support a green economic recovery from the impact of the Covid lockdown. The measures contained in this report should therefore have a positive impact on all residents, including those who share protected characteristics.
- 13.3 An improvement in air quality will benefit all ages but especially those suffering with childhood and lifelong asthma. Measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes will enable more people to live in warm homes, reducing fuel poverty, and particularly benefit those older people, people with disabilities and people in poor health who spend more time at home and live on lower incomes, as well as people who live in disadvantaged areas.
- 13.4 The Equality Analysis of the draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan are summarised above, with the analysis form attached as Appendix 2.

Approved by: Denise McCausland, Equalities Manager, dated 26/01/2022.

### **14 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 14.1 All works carried out to date and going forward are expected to have a beneficial impact on the Council's carbon footprint as well as on the greening of our borough and the air quality.

### **15 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 15.1 There is no crime and disorder impact arising from this report.

### **16 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

- 16.1 To welcome the report and note the progression of actions within the draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan and actions across all priority areas. The individual and collective delivery of these actions will deliver the outcomes

required to enable Croydon in achieving its carbon reduction targets whilst creating the public and corporate change in behaviour required for its delivery.

## **17 OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

17.1 None

## **18 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

18.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

**NO**

18.2 HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?

**NO**

The Director of Sustainable Communities comments that the council's information management team have advised that a DPIA would not be required in this instance and that the subject of the report does not involve the processing of personal data.

Approved: by Steve Iles, Director of Sustainable Communities, dated 26/01/2022.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** James Perkins, Head of Environmental Services

### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

***Appendix 1 – Draft Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan***

***Appendix 2 – Equalities Analysis of Croydon Carbon Neutral Action Plan***