


## LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

Meeting / Date	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>13 October 2022</b>	
Report Title	<b>Waltham Forest's Climate Action Plan: A Path to be UK's Leading Borough for Collective Climate Action</b>	
Cabinet Portfolio	Councillor Clyde Loakes, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Lead Member for Climate & Air Quality	
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Wards affected	All	
Public Access	Open	
Appendices	1. Carbon Emissions Modelling 2. Climate Action Plan (CAP) 3. Equalities Screening Assessment 4. Sustainability Matrix 5. Reference from Climate Scrutiny Committee [to follow]	

### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Cabinet is recommended to reaffirm Waltham Forest's commitment to reducing our net-carbon emissions to zero by 2030 and approve the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and associated staffing and investment budgets required to meet that commitment.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- 2.1.1 Note and consider the latest modelling of Waltham Forest's carbon emissions, as in Appendix 1, including the estimate of the share of the carbon reductions that the Council can influence and note the Council's commitment to reduce the net carbon emissions in the borough to zero by 2030.
- 2.1.2 Approve Waltham Forest's Climate Action Plan, as in Appendix 2, which sets out how the council will support residents and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions, and commit to the actions set out therein.
- 2.1.3 Approve annual funding of £1.1m to deliver the commitments in the Climate Action Plan. This includes £577k for staff resourcing which will

be incorporate within the 2023/24 MTFS and the £571k for investment in Climate Actions from the Reset reserve.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019, recognising it as the single most important challenge facing us all. With this declaration, the Council signified its intention of being a Net-Zero Council by 2030. To act as a guiding hand, an independent Climate Emergency Commission was established to review the Council's current position and provide a series of recommendations on where improvements could be made.
- 3.2 The Commission's [final report](#), containing 29 recommendations, went to Cabinet in December 2020. Cabinet noted the report and agreed to receive a further report setting out how the Council intends to respond to those recommendations.
- 3.3 The ensuing pandemic unfortunately caused unmitigable delays, and the follow-up [report](#) went to Cabinet in October 2021. The approach and initial funding ask, set out in the report, were accepted by Cabinet. The report outlined the overall approach and a range of initial projects, but there is a need to go further. It also committed to bringing a further report with a detailed Climate Action Plan for our response to the Climate Emergency.
- 3.4 This Cabinet Paper and accompanying appendices constitutes that further report setting out our plans for reaching net-zero by 2030.
- 3.5 To support our response to the Climate Emergency and create our Climate Action Plan, we worked with two partners: Arup and PA Consulting. Arup supported our response with Carbon Modelling (Appendix 1) and the Climate Action Plan (Appendix 2). PA Consulting supported our response by recommending a new operating model to deliver our ambitious cross-cutting work programme.
- 3.6 Arup's Carbon Modelling (Appendix 1: Carbon Emissions Modelling, Arup, August 2022) shows the scale of the challenge. The territorial emissions in Waltham Forest in 2020 are around 700 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide (or equivalent levels of other greenhouse gases), written in shorthand as 700 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e. Our aim to reduce this, by 2030, to a level when any remaining emissions are netted off by activities that remove carbon, for example the carbon that is captured by the trees in the borough.
- 3.7 In the main modelling scenario – where the Council, the Public and Central Government show delivery to the maximum feasible ambition – our remaining emissions would be 110-150 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e which we believe we can net off with carbon removal. In this scenario, all carbon emission reduction will not be Council led. Our bold and ambitious Climate Action Plan, and our drive for collective climate action will reduce emissions (around 250 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e) but we also require further action from Central Government and will be outlining what action we would want to see in a

separate report: "Closing the Gap: our Asks of Central Government to Tackle the Climate Emergency".

- 3.8 From the carbon modelling, we also know where Waltham Forest's carbon emissions come from and where we need to focus our action. We separate our actions into 4 areas – which constitute the 4 main sections in the Climate Action Plan: energy efficient buildings; a place for people not cars; consuming less, recycling more; and a greener, more resilient borough. Each section does not set out all the actions we will take in this area, given our climate work will necessarily be dynamic; instead, each section sets out the most important actions proposed. We will need to take bold action, and this action needs to be disruptive, but disruptive in a fair way. Therefore, in addition, in each section, we highlight what we see to be the major disruption and how that links to climate justice.
- 3.9 The largest emission area in the borough is from our buildings. If the Council is to reach its target of Net Zero, housing is an area where large scale carbon reduction needs to happen. Members, in the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee meeting on climate and during a visit to the Council's Eco Show Home, heard how in 2019 housing was accountable for just under half of the borough's emissions. With retrofitting currently being very costly, and the Council having control over a small section of the total housing stock in the borough, the challenges are clear. However, by improving the energy efficiency of our own housing stock, and encouraging private homeowners to do the same, we will reap benefits beyond carbon emission reductions, including reduced energy bills for residents and the creation of job opportunities in the borough.
- 3.10 Our priority in this area is to make all buildings in Waltham Forest more energy efficient. This is the first out of four sections in our Climate Action Plan and it sets out 6 specific actions we recommend: eliminating fuel poverty by driving funding to improve poorest and leakiest homes; starting a retrofit company to build confidence in high quality supply; launching a retrofit loan to nudge residents who may be in the able to pay sector to act sooner; "eco-home to eco-streets" - reimagining planning to support climate action; and finally local green businesses - tailored support for the top 20 business emitters across the borough.
- 3.11 In addition, we will look at our new developments – anything we build now, needs meet the standards we want in 2030. We need to evaluate the best options, but we commit to going further that we currently do in our standards (BRE AAM, EPC) and on specific (no gas boilers, and always triple glazing). Please see Appendix 2 - Climate Action Plan (CAP) for more details.
- 3.12 The second largest emission area is transport. Active and sustainable transport is an area where the Council has made significant developments since the 'Mini-Holland' programme started over eight years ago. Through successfully securing funding from Transport for London for the scheme, the Council embarked on an ambitious and pioneering programme to introduce cycle infrastructure and Low Traffic

Neighbourhoods (LTNs) throughout the borough. Mini-Holland has since been encompassed as part of the wider Enjoy Waltham Forest programme, and the Council continues to create circumstances where people can easily walk and cycle, encouraging residents to make fewer journeys by car. The award-winning 'Enjoy Waltham Forest' scheme resulted in new infrastructure - 50km of cycle tracks; 642 hangars with 3852 spaces, 172 blended crossings and 66 new and improved crossings – but also real outcomes – a 45% increase in the average daily number of cyclists and a 95% reduction in number of households exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution.

- 3.13 Any further changes need to work with other changes in the borough. For example, more recently the Council has been developing the 15 Minute Neighbourhood concept which will aim to ensure residents can access vital services and amenities within a 15-minute walk or cycle.
- 3.14 Our priority in transport is to create a place for people, not cars. This is the second out of four sections in the Climate Action Plan. Some of the specific actions we recommend are - breaking free from our dependence on the private car by expanding car clubs, car free days and car-free neighbourhoods; increasing cycle storage to eliminate the waiting list for priority residents; repurposing some Council owned car parks into EV charging hubs, green spaces or affordable homes; and expanding EV (Electric Vehicle) charging across the borough – enabling the switch away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. Please see Appendix 2 - Climate Action Plan (CAP) for more details.
- 3.15 Our third area of focus is on creating a greener, more resilient borough. This comes against the backdrop of widespread flooding in June 2021 that caused damage, distress and forced people from their homes. Extreme weather incidences like flash flooding and wildfires are predicted to become more common as the Climate Emergency worsens.
- 3.16 In the Climate Action Plan we recommend specific actions such as: complementing our infrastructure approach with collective action to build flood and wildfire resilience, increase canopy cover by establishing forests within the forest for the benefit of residents, and extending our schemes to increase drainage in flood risk areas.
- 3.17 We will also use development and planning to make Waltham Forest a haven for nature. Carbon emissions are far from our only goal. The Council will use planning tools to help us prevent developments which hinder our goal to be a greener and more resilient borough. Finally, 'Biophilic' design is the idea of getting closer to the natural environment in what we build, and we will push this concept in Waltham Forest. Please see Appendix 2 – Climate Action Plan (CAP) for more detail.
- 3.18 Our fourth area of focus and by no means the least is on Consumption and Recycling. The specific actions we recommend are - reduce food poverty and food waste, new strategy for encouraging recycling, eliminate single use plastic and establish a library of things in every neighbourhood. Please see Appendix 2 – Climate Action Plan (CAP) for more detail.

- 3.19 We also recognise that our residents will expect the Council to play a leading role. In each of the four areas set out above, the council will lead and inspire collective action by leading by example and acting on the council's own carbon emissions. By acting to change our own emissions - how our staff commute to work, how we decide what to buy, the energy efficiency of our own buildings – we hope to encourage collective actions. In the Climate Action Plan we recommend these specific actions: all Council owned, occupied or developed buildings to be retrofitted to an average of EPC level B or higher by, all Council's fleet (including leased vehicles) to be fully electric by 2030, placing climate action at the heart of everything we buy, encourage the use of EV cars only, showcasing the council's leadership through its cultural assets and destinations and transforming operations to further reduce the energy use on our estates. Please see Appendix 2 – Climate Action Plan (CAP) for more detail.
- 3.20 In addition to our climate actions, we recognise we need to change how we operate as a Council. To achieve this ambitious, transformational programme of change, we will need the right infrastructure in place at the Council. We need a new team to make this happen, although in truth this will need to be a Council-wide effort if we are going to be successful. Our partners PA Consulting worked closely with us to recommend a new operating model to deliver our ambitious cross-cutting work programme.
- 3.21 Our proposal, based on the recommendations from PA consulting, are to drive climate impact through a hub-and-spoke model.
- 3.22 The role of the hub is three-fold: the hub sets strategic direction by defining the strategy, targets, and policies; the hub equips Corporate Directors with what they need to enact change by supplying Corporate Directors with toolkits, data, and access to in-house climate consultancy; and finally, the hub holds senior leaders to account by ensuring CE delivery is monitored against science-based targets and communicated internally and externally to show progress against targets. We propose building a climate team (the 'hub') to deliver on these 3 roles.
- 3.23 The spokes will be where most of the climate action will be delivered. The role of the spokes is two-fold: the enabling spokes co-ordinate climate activity across supporting corporate services by harnessing existing organisational capability in data and communications combine it with climate insight from the hub to provide direction and support across the council; and the delivery spokes are the engine to deliver the change within people and place directorates by driving forward against targets set whilst drawing in technical support from the hub. Given climate must be mainstreamed into everything we do as a Council, we propose hiring new climate emergency specific roles to complement existing staff to ensure successful delivery.
- 3.24 Finally, we are very clear that the Council cannot make the transition towards net zero emissions alone - we will only be successful if it works for everyone across the diversity of residents and businesses in Waltham Forest. To ensure that we are pursuing the right actions, in the

right way, deep and ongoing engagement with people all over Waltham Forest is crucial.

- 3.25 We will continue to engage residents and businesses to build a movement around climate action. We will create a resident climate panel to gather thoughts and opinions from a representative group to steer our collective action to tackle climate change. We will create a crowd-funding scheme for residents to determine priorities for investment in their local area. Finally, we create a public platform to track our progress on specific actions and targets, and help residents hold us accountable for taking the action we need.

#### **4. OPTIONS & ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Do nothing – Not recommended because without the Council acting the carbon emissions in the borough would not decrease fast enough to meet our Net Zero commitment.
- 4.2 Postpone our Net Zero target until 2040 – Global warming is created by cumulative greenhouse gases, this means the earlier we reduce carbon emissions from the borough, the greater the impact on the warming planet and the disastrous accompanying effects, both globally and locally.

#### **5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES (AND OTHER NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES)**

- 5.1 Acting now in response to the Climate Emergency has local climatic benefits (reducing the risk of flooding and heatwaves) and has other non-climatic benefits, many of which complement other strategic priorities of the council.
- 5.2 Cost-of-Living: Even at the reduced-price cap of £2,500, energy bills will account for an average (median) of 7% of household expenditure. For many households this will be much higher. Every Waltham Forest resident deserves a warm home and being able to afford to heat that home is becoming increasingly hard for many residents. Improving domestic energy efficiency is one of the most effective ways to reduce energy bills. Our climate action plan sets out how we will support residents to improve the energy efficiency of homes in the borough, prioritising fuel poor households, and so helping with the Council wide priority on the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
- 5.3 Health Inequalities: Continuing to shift how we move around from carbon intensive modes (like internal combustion engine cars and lorries) to more sustainable modes (like walking, cycling and public transport) can help improve air quality. Air Quality, particularly Nitrous Oxide and Particulate Matter, has large and well-evidenced detrimental impacts on our health. In addition, it is often those living with higher levels of deprivation that suffer most.

- 5.4 15 Minute Neighbourhoods: Our long-term plan is geared towards residents having access to all the facilities they need within a 15-minute walk or ride from where they live. 15-minute neighbourhoods are key to our residents being able to lead healthy, green, and sustainable lives. Our response to the Climate Emergency is very complementary to our Council wide priority of 15 Minute Neighbourhoods. The sustainable transport actions will help encourage more local journeys. The nature and resilience actions will help improve local access to green spaces and reduce the feeling of being unsafe from flooding and heatwaves.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Climate Action Plan has been submitted to Climate Scrutiny and was reviewed in the Climate Scrutiny Committee meeting on 29 September 2022. Climate Scrutiny made two recommendations: first that services encourage Sixty Bricks to commit to a pledge that 100% of new homes built will be net zero carbon by 2030; and second that services consider opening pop-up reuse shops across the Borough to encourage the circular economy. The Climate Team will review these recommendations and reporting back to Climate Scrutiny on these.
- 6.2 A formal consultation prior to the launch of the Climate Action Plan was not conducted for two reasons.
- 6.3 First, we have engaged with residents extensively prior to developing the Climate Action Plan - through the work of the Climate Commission and subsequent internal research. We gathered the opinions on climate from more than 3,000 residents. We know, for example, that Waltham Forest residents support the Council's focus on the Climate Emergency. In a recent survey of over 4,000 residents, nearly half (44%) said they wanted more guidance from the Council on what they can do to tackle the Climate Emergency.
- 6.4 Second, after launching the Climate Action Plan, we will have a period of community engagement. This will be an opportunity to build a local movement around climate action.

## **7. IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk**

- 7.1.1 The total funding required to deliver the Climate Emergency each year is £1.148m and includes:
- (a) £577k for staffing which will be included within the 2023/24 MTFS as a growth item and any requirement in the current year will be funded from contingency.
  - (b) £571k for investment in specific Climate Actions which will be funded from the Reset reserve and subject to approval by the ROI board. Where a specific return is anticipated this will be incorporated within a business case for consideration by the ROI board.

- 7.1.2 The funding for the Climate Actions will be grouped into three categories – namely ‘Small but High impact’, ‘Medium’, and ‘Large’ expenditure groups. Identified ‘Small but high impact’ actions would be funded from the Climate Actions funding allocated from Reset (£571k/year). The ‘Medium’ category would include actions that would require individual business cases if they were to be delivered. For example, retrofit loan, reducing the bike hangar waiting list and community fridges/libraries if scaled. The ‘Large’ expenditure category belongs to the group of very large investments (for example – eliminating fuel poverty, more mini-hollands and many more EV charging infrastructure) for which external funding would need to be sought.
- 7.1.3 In 2020, Cabinet approved an initial targeted budget of £1m capital funding per annum over 5 years, commencing from the 2020/21 financial year, to deliver identified actions as part of the Council’s response to the Climate Emergency Commission’s recommendations. Provision has been made for the funding allocated from the financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25 to be made immediately available, as necessary, as a consolidated £5m Climate Emergency Fund. Of the £5m approved budget over five years - Forecast cumulative spend for 2020/21 to 2022/23 is £2m of which £827k is the cumulative spend to date. £1.5m has been awarded to Sustainable Transport and £52k to Suntrap out of the Capital Strategy Fund. The available unallocated balance of the fund is £3m. This budget is held in corporate contingency and any allocations from this budget for individual proposals are approved by the political lead for Climate Emergency and the s151 officer.
- 7.1.4 A key priority for a wide range of organisations within Waltham Forest, including the Council is to secure external funding to respond to the Climate Emergency recommendations.
- 7.1.5 External funding for climate action has already been secured and will continue to be actioned each year. Funding received to date includes:
- (c) In June, the Council was successful in receiving over £1m in funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles to deliver 500 single-socket lamp column charging points.
  - (d) £2.2m has been secured through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to retrofit 12 public buildings including The Hive (formerly Suntrap Education Centre) in Epping Forest.
  - (e) The retrofit of the historic EMD Cinema will include air source pumps and solar panels funded through the Mayor’s Energy Efficiency and Carbon Offset Fund.

## **7.2 Legal**

- 7.2.1 Section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 (“the Act”) sets out the Government’s target for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 no. 1056 amended section 1 so that the target is for at least net zero greenhouse gas emissions (following any adjustment for trading in carbon units). This statutory instrument increases the required percentage reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from at least 80% to



at least 100%. The instrument retains the words “at least” as those remain appropriate in a net zero context, in recognition of the fact that it is possible to overperform against the updated 2050 target, by achieving net negative emissions. The Council’s target of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 meets the legal target that the Government has set to tackle climate change and aims to do so in a much shorter timeframe.

- 7.2.2 Where the projects proposed require the procurement of goods, services, supplies, or works these will be procured in accordance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

### **7.3 Equalities and Diversity**

- 7.3.1 The proposal is not considered to have any potential for negative impact on protected equality characteristics. All contractors are required to have up-to-date equal opportunities policies. Please refer to Appendix 3 Equalities Screening Assessment.
- 7.3.2 Our strategy for tackling the Climate Emergency, when fully realised, is expected to impact every resident of the borough in numerous ways. The strategy is expected to lead to policy changes in wide ranging areas including transport, housing, and business. The strategy recognises that the impacts of the Climate Emergency will be felt by all.

### **7.4 Sustainability (Including Climate Change, Health, Crime and Disorder)**

- 7.4.1 The response and actions of the Council set out in this report will have significant positive benefits on sustainability and climate change, with the purpose being to reach a zero-carbon borough by 2030. Carbon emission savings and the impact in terms of tackling Climate Change will be quantified for each individual project as it is developed, delivered, and monitored. Further Cabinet reports will, wherever possible, quantify the savings and impact as appropriate in respect of future identified actions.
- 7.4.2 The sustainability impacts (Appendix 4) will be wide ranging and highly impactful. Positive impacts will deliver collective action against climate change which will benefit all residents of Waltham Forest. Any potential negative impacts would be mitigated. These impacts will be promoted as individual programmes of work and as part of a wider Behaviour Change Strategy.

### **7.5 Council Infrastructure**

- 7.5.1 As discussed in the proposals section above, our proposed structure is to drive climate impact through a hub-and-spoke model. We propose building a climate team (the ‘hub’) to set strategy and drive climate action.
- 7.5.2 The new climate team will primarily work in Waltham Forest Town Hall and from home. We do not foresee any IT issues arising from the proposals outlined.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)**

None