

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY PANEL B</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>12 NOVEMBER 2020</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY REVIEW: CLIMATE CHANGE</b>		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>		
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>ALL</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>NO</b>		
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>NO</b>		

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to serve as an introduction to the Scrutiny Review: Climate Change, including setting out information within the Council's refreshed Corporate Plan, the results of a 2019 employee survey regarding climate change, and setting terms of reference for the review.

The first meeting of the Panel on this topic is an opportunity to set clear objectives for the review, while establishing the key information and involvement needed.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Scrutiny Panel B Members are recommended to:

- a. Note the information contained within the report.
- b. Set initial terms of reference for the review, including objectives, methodology, involvement and key information required.
- c. Consider the Council's current corporate objectives and priorities regarding climate change.

### **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

Climate Change was added to the Scrutiny Workplan 2020/2021 by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2020, having originally been set up as a separate scrutiny commission.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

No alternative options have been considered at this stage of the review. Any alternative options considered will be outlined alongside the final report of the review to be presented to Cabinet.

## Detailed Information

### INTRODUCTION

Please see some introductory information from the National Geographic Society regarding climate change, available at <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/climate-change/>.<sup>1</sup>

#### What is Climate Change?

Climate change is a long-term shift in global or regional climate patterns. Often climate change refers specifically to the rise in global temperatures from the mid-20th century to present.

Climate is sometimes mistaken for weather. However, climate is different from weather because it is measured over a long period, whereas weather can change from day to day, or from year to year. The climate of an area includes seasonal temperature and rainfall averages, and wind patterns. Different places have different climates. A desert, for example, is referred to as an arid climate because little water falls, as rain or snow, during the year. Other types of climate include tropical climates, which are hot and humid, and temperate climates, which have warm summers and cooler winters.

Climate change is the long-term alteration of temperature and typical weather patterns in a place. Climate change could refer to a particular location or the planet as a whole. Climate change may cause weather patterns to be less predictable. These unexpected weather patterns can make it difficult to maintain and grow crops in regions that rely on farming because expected temperature and rainfall levels can no longer be relied on. Climate change has also been connected with other damaging weather events such as more frequent and more intense hurricanes, floods, downpours, and winter storms.

In Polar Regions, the warming global temperatures associated with climate change have meant ice sheets and glaciers are melting at an accelerated rate from season to season. This contributes to sea levels rising in different regions of the planet. Together with expanding ocean waters due to rising temperatures, the resulting rise in sea level has begun to damage coastlines as a result of increased flooding and erosion.

The cause of current climate change is largely human activity, like burning fossil fuels, such as natural gas, oil, and coal. Burning these materials releases what are called greenhouse gases into Earth's atmosphere. There, these gases trap heat from the sun's rays inside the atmosphere causing Earth's average temperature to rise. This rise in the planet's temperature is called global warming. The warming of the planet impacts local and regional climates. Throughout Earth's history, climate has continually changed. When occurring naturally, this slow process has taken place over hundreds and thousands of years. The human influenced climate change that is happening now is occurring at a much faster rate.

#### Local Authorities and Climate Change

According to the Local Government Association, around 230 councils have declared a climate emergency. Many councils are taking action to reduce carbon emissions and working with partners and local communities to tackle the impact of climate change on their local area.

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<sup>1</sup> National Geographic Society, *Climate Change*, 2020.

The LGA and the Centre for Public Scrutiny have made many resources available to assist Council's scrutinising climate change and the impact on local areas. Panel Members may wish to review these resources as the review progresses.

## **SCRUTINY REVIEW: CLIMATE CHANGE**

Members have previously discussed climate change and voted on a motion that was carried in July 2019 as follows:

*This Council acknowledges the steps that Ashfield District Council have been taking to combat climate change.*

*This Council is proud of the measures we are already taking at a local level. This includes:*

- (1) Ensuring energy efficiency across all our buildings and the moves towards reducing fleet emissions.*
- (2) Ensuring a comprehensive programme of planting trees - replacing every tree removed with two trees and planting 1000 trees across the District over the next four years.*
- (3) Ensuring that our planning policy continues to support blue and green infrastructure (rivers, streams, parks and nature reserves)*
- (4) Continues to work with community groups across the Ashfield District.*

*This Council has an obligation to continue to lead, catalyse, support and influence actions by residents, our partners and businesses in the Ashfield District.*

*This Council therefore resolves to:*

- (1) Reaffirm its commitment to doing everything possible to combat climate change including committing to a robust climate change strategy.*
- (2) Include an assessment of the implications for sustainability and the environment in all relevant reports to committees."*

During these discussions, it was also announced that a scrutiny commission would be established with the purpose of considering climate change and ensuring that a green thread runs through all Council policies and strategies.

Due to extenuating circumstances over the past year, the commission has been unable to get off the ground as a separate function. Because of this, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt it would be most appropriate to add the topic of climate change to the 2020/2021 workplan to be considered as a normal review topic.

## **ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL – CORPORATE PLAN**

Members may find the Council's Corporate Plan a good starting point to understand the Council's goals and ambitions regarding climate change, along with any strategies and policies already in place.

'Cleaner and Greener' is one of the five key priorities identified by the Council set out in the Corporate Plan.

Within the Corporate Plan, the Council's vision for the 'Cleaner and Greener' priority is established:

*By 2023, we will create a cleaner and greener Ashfield, enabling communities and businesses to thrive in a clean and tidy district, minimising waste and recycling more.*

*Ashfield is pro-active in encouraging more recycling, tackling environmental crime and finding innovative ways of delivering services that are responsive to the needs of our residents, visitors and businesses.*

*By working with our communities and businesses, the Council is better able to understand what matters and to shape services to help people enjoy living, visiting, and working in Ashfield.*

The Corporate Plan further outlines numerous key projects, programmes, and initiatives to be implemented within the next four years. Please see some of the initiatives that may be of interest to this review:

### Environment

- Deliver against our Environmental Charter
- Refresh the Green Business Scheme to engage businesses and promote environmentally sustainable behaviours
- Work with community volunteers and local business volunteers to encourage an increase in ownership of community open spaces
- Contribute to a reduction of CO2 emissions by increasing tree coverage in Ashfield
- Develop a Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan

### **EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2019 – CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION**

As part of the Employee Survey 2019, respondents were asked to suggest ideas and actions that the Council could or should implement to support climate change mitigation.

As part of this survey, over 100 suggestions were made, with all suggestions fed into the Council's project to develop its policy and strategy approach to climate change.

Panel Members may find it useful to see the most submitted suggestions:

#### Fleet and Personal Vehicles

- Implement electric vehicle fleet by phasing out petrol and diesel vehicles
- Promote car share schemes
- Encourage use of personal electric vehicles through changes to car user designations
- Provide solar powered electric charging points

#### Paperless Meetings/Offices & Reduced Paper Use

- Phase out use of paper agendas
- Have paper free offices
- Reduce printing

- Reduce leaflet drops

### Recycling

- Make household recycling easier/increase what can be recycled
- Introduce food waste collections

### Smarter Working

- Expand agile working/working from home
- Improve options to reduce customer visits

### Energy & Resources

- Maximise provision of solar panels and use of solar technology
- Reduce use of single use plastics

### Policy

- Ensure planning policies include carbon neutral and energy efficient homes
- Use Future High Streets/Town Funds to invest in and support green technologies
- Ensure procurement exercises include climate considerations
- Phase out single use plastic
- Provide subsidised use of public transport

### Awareness Raising

- Raise awareness of actions that the Council is taking
- Host climate change conversation sessions for employees
- Provide a climate change suggestion box on the intranet
- Undertake awareness campaigns

## **NEXT STEPS**

### Establishing Terms of Reference

At the outset of the review process, Panel Members should set terms of reference for the Climate Change topic. The terms of reference should include review objectives, methodology, involvement, and key information required.

#### Objectives:

- Establish the progress of the Council's 'Cleaner and Greener' key corporate priority
- Ensure the Council is working effectively towards climate change mitigation
- Understand the policies and strategies in place and in development regarding climate change

#### Methodology:

- Examine Council strategies and policies
- Examples from other authorities

- Consult and liaise with key partners
- Review national and local data

Involvement:

- To be determined by Panel Members

Key Information:

- National and local data
- Environmental Charter, Green Business Scheme, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan
- National initiatives
- LGA guidance and case studies

## **Implications**

### **Corporate Plan:**

Details of how the Scrutiny Review: Climate Change align with the Council's Corporate Plan are included within the detailed information section of the report.

### **Legal:**

There are no legal implications at this stage of the review. Any legal implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

### **Finance:**

There are no financial implications at this stage of the review. Any financial implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Implication</b>
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

### **Risk:**

Any risks and mitigation discovered over the course of this review will be presented in a final report to Cabinet along with the Panel's recommendations.

Risk	Mitigation
None at this stage.	None at this stage.

### **Human Resources:**

There are no HR implications at this stage of the review. Any HR implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

### **Environmental/Sustainability**

Environmental and sustainability implications will be heavily considered throughout this review, details of which will be included within the detailed information section of the report.

### **Equalities:**

There are no equalities implications at this stage of the review. Any equalities implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

### **Other Implications:**

There are no other implications at this stage of the review. Any other implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

### **Reason(s) for Urgency**

None.

### **Reason(s) for Exemption**

None.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Report Author and Contact Officer**

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