

<b>Report to:</b>	Full Council	<b>Date:</b>	22 July 2019
<b>Report title:</b>	Petition for the council to declare a climate and ecological emergency		
<b>Report from:</b>	Mary Morrissey, Strategic Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration		
<b>Ward/Areas affected:</b>	Borough Wide		
<b>Chair of Committee/Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Manuel Abellan		
<b>Author(s)/Contact Number(s):</b>	Jennifer Sibley, Acting Head of Environment Strategy, 020 8770 5678 Katrina Lloyd, Senior Sustainability Officer, 020 8770 6227		
<b>Corporate Plan Priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being Active</li> <li>• Making Informed Choices</li> <li>• Living Well Independently</li> <li>• Keeping People Safe</li> </ul>		
<b>Open/Exempt:</b>	Open		
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	11 July 2019

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 Sutton has a well earned reputation for its green credentials, through supporting early sustainable build projects such as BedZED, adopting a One Planet approach in 2005 and more recently agreeing an ambitious Environment Strategy to be London's most sustainable borough. Everyone working, living and studying in Sutton has a part to play in being Ambitious for Sutton and protecting the environment of our borough.
- 1.2 This report considers the petition on declaring a climate and ecological emergency, submitted to Full Council on 30 April 2019.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To declare a climate emergency within the borough of Sutton with the ambition to create a net zero carbon borough by 2045.
- 2.2 To agree that updates be reported to the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee, as part of the Environment Strategy annual progress report.

### 3. Background

3.1 Mark Webb submitted a petition which started on 21 March 2019, which has been referred to Full Council for consideration.

3.2 The petition has 1,727 eligible signatures and the petition prayer is set out below:

“We the undersigned petition the council to acknowledge the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)’s Special Report on Global Warming (October 2018).

We request that Sutton Borough Council notes the London Assembly has declared a Climate Emergency, recognises the seriousness of the situation and welcomes further ambitious steps.

We request that Sutton Borough Council acknowledges the action already taken by Bristol, Manchester and many other city councils around the UK and the world to declare and commit necessary resources to tackling a Climate Emergency.

We urge you to declare a Climate Emergency, supported by specific plans of action to make Sutton carbon neutral by 2030, and to call on government to give Sutton Borough Council the powers and funding to make this possible.

We ask that Sutton Borough Council, its partners and representatives work together to report back to council and petitioners within 6 months with specific proposals.”

*Justification:*

“After the Paris agreement in 2015 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was charged with producing a special report detailing the differences between a 1.5° rise and a 2° rise. The UK government as a signatory committed the country to do its part in relation to the agreement. This petition follows the logic of the agreement in asking for detailed and specific plans for Sutton.”

3.3 In accordance with Part 4E of the Council’s Constitution, in paragraph 34.5, the scheme for dealing with petitions and e-petitions states that the spokesperson may talk to the petition for up to 5 minutes and the petition will then be debated.

3.4 The latest data published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates that the world must keep global temperature rises below 1.5°C to avoid catastrophic impacts from climate change. If the temperature rise continues at the current rate, global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between the period 2030 - 2052.

3.5 The IPCC have stated that to ensure a 1.5°C temperature rise is not exceeded, global net CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must decline by approximately 45 per cent by 2030 from a 2010 baseline, achieving net zero carbon by 2050.

#### 4. Issues

- 4.1 Sutton has a reputation as a leader in sustainability and recently agreed a new Environment Strategy (2019-25) with an ambition to be London's most sustainable borough. The Strategy supports the Council's corporate plan, Ambitious for Sutton, sets targets up to 2025, and aligns with the Mayor of London's Environment Strategy, to achieve a net zero carbon London by 2050.
- 4.2 The Strategy supports greening of the borough, reducing energy and water use and delivering sustainable food. There is a target to reduce borough CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 40% compared to a 2007 baseline. Action plans have been developed and will be reviewed annually, to take account of new opportunities as legislation and technology changes.
- 4.3 Reducing climate change and creating a zero carbon borough has implications for everyone who lives, works or studies in the borough. Whilst the difficulty of achieving net zero carbon should not be underestimated, benefits include the creation of new jobs, more sustainable growth, cleaner air, and security of utilities such as renewable energy. It is likely that the costs of adapting to climate change if global temperatures rise more than 1.5°C would be much higher than the costs of taking mitigating action.
- 4.4 Sutton has a history of success in reducing the impact of climate change, including:
- Between 2007 - 2017 borough CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita reduced from 4.6 to 2.8t per capita.
  - Sutton delivered the Solar Together London scheme, where 75 residents installed solar panels on their roofs. The council has installed solar panels on its own estate, at the Civic Offices, Gibson Road Car Park and the Grange Youth Centre.
  - The Sutton Local Plan has brought in new requirements for developers to achieve at least a 35% reduction in carbon emissions on site. The remaining carbon emissions must be offset to zero either by reductions being delivered elsewhere or paid into a carbon offset fund.
  - The council's new waste and recycling service which introduced a weekly food waste collection, resulting in a 50% borough recycling rate which is the second highest in London.
  - In September 2018 the council passed a motion to reduce single use plastics both in its own buildings and to work with local businesses to do the same.
  - In June 2019 the council launched a new air quality action plan. Actions completed include the installation of a green wall at Robin Hood Junior School and the installation of a Brompton cycle hire station near Sutton Train Station.
  - The SuDS in Sutton Schools project is currently taking place to reduce the risk of flooding in the Carshalton and Hackbridge areas. A rain garden has been installed at Denmark Road offices.
  - In 2019 TfL launched a Go Sutton service, a rapid on-demand bus that allows customers to request a ride, select a pick up and drop off point, and pay via an app. The trial aims to encourage people to use public transport who wouldn't normally consider this mode of transport.

## 5. Options Considered

5.1 A number of options have been considered in response to the petition:

Option 1 - Declare a climate change emergency with a commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2030, as the petition requests.

Option 2 - Declare a climate emergency, with a commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2045 (recommended option).

Option 3 - Opt not to declare a climate emergency.

5.2 Achieving net zero carbon by 2030 or 2045 will require significant action by a range of organisations. The petition requests that the council calls on the government to provide the funding to make a 2030 zero carbon target possible. In addition to funding, the government would need to make significant policy changes.

5.3 Actions needed at a borough level include residents adopting low carbon, sustainable lifestyles, and the council managing our building estate, fleet, working practices and relationships with suppliers. Some of the further anticipated actions required to achieve a zero carbon target are set out below:

- Install renewable energy generators, such as solar panels or wind turbines on council, private, third and public sector and residential properties.
- A tree planting programme to capture carbon, improve biodiversity and create avenues of shade.
- Create car-free areas, low emission areas, and more dedicated routes for cycles and public transport only.
- High environmental standards for all new buildings in the borough.
- Install more electric vehicle charging points, preferably linked to solar panels or other forms of local energy generation networks.
- Support people to reduce food waste, and encourage people to reduce consumption of meat, fish and dairy products.
- Green roofs will need to become commonplace and new green spaces established that contribute to carbon storage and protect from flash-flooding.
- More sustainable drainage schemes installed, with drought resistant planting that can react to heavy, flash flooding.
- Encourage every home and business to install water saving devices and energy efficiency measures, recycle everything they can and minimise their waste through reuse.

### Option 1 Declaring a climate change emergency with a commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

5.4 To deliver this option the council would need to significantly accelerate its current plans and actions (set out in the Environment Strategy). Powers and funding would need to be provided by the government to enable this.

Option 2 - Declaring a climate emergency, with a commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2045. (Recommended Option)

- 5.5 This option is more ambitious than the IPCC recommendation to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. It is anticipated that the target and associated actions would be embedded into the Sutton Environment Strategy.

Option 3 - Opting not to declare a climate emergency.

- 5.6 This is not considered to be an acceptable option given Sutton's green credentials and ambition to be London's most sustainable borough.

Reporting back on specific proposals

- 5.7 The petition requests that the council works with its partners and representatives to report back to council and petitioners within 6 months of declaring a climate emergency with specific proposals. As the council has recently approved a new Environment Strategy, it is recommended that actions taken to tackle climate change are reported to Environment and Neighbourhood Committee as part of the Environment Strategy annual progress report.

## **6. Impacts and Implications**

Financial

- 6.1 The report recommends that option 2 is selected as the approved option.
- 6.2 As the report is the adoption of a target there are no committed actions at this stage that will have revenue impacts. Adoption of this target may indicate a constructive obligation in future years to undertake projects that will contribute to achieving the zero carbon objective without creating a legal obligation at this time.
- 6.3 Any future programmes will need to be agreed in separate reports that will be scheme specific. The examples of the potential programmes mentioned in section 5.3 would be a combination of revenue and capital and funding and would have to be identified at the time once more detailed financial information is available.
- 6.4 Funding for the schemes given as examples in the report does not currently exist within revenue budgets. Additional funding will need to be sought from central government bodies or partnerships with private sector organisations. There may be potential for future government funding but at this stage there are no specific grants or funding streams announced/identified that relate to the zero carbon 2050 target so at this stage is just an assumption. Currently there are no existing resources to cover the future activities that are given as examples. Future funding may be made available from the Mayor of London. Successful attainment of external funding may also require

an element of match funding by the authority or a contribution in kind in the form of project management, therefore any activities need to be aligned with the corporate priorities of the council including achieving financial balance in future years.

- 6.5 Specific costings for these activities are not available at this time and further detailed costings would need to be produced once it is determined which actions are put forward. A more formal appraisal can then be undertaken.
- 6.6 There are currently no associated financial risks as the report is only stating a commitment to the idea. There are no specific action points at this stage.
- 6.7 Future reports regarding specific value for money appraisal will be required. At this stage there are none. A robust appraisal process will need to be undertaken if any decision is made to directly fund any projects on an “Invest to Save” basis in the future.

Legal

- 6.8 There are no anticipated legal implications associated with declaring a climate emergency. This is a voluntary action undertaken by the council.

Environmental

- 6.9 Adoption of a climate emergency would have a positive environmental impact with the declaration forming part of the council’s delivery of its ambitious Environment Strategy.

Risk

- 6.10 Sutton has a long standing history of being at the forefront of tackling environmental issues. Choosing not to declare a climate emergency or a commitment to deliver zero carbon could be viewed as contradictory to its ambitions.
- 6.11 The risks associated with declaring a climate emergency have been reviewed as part of the options considered section above. Adopting a zero carbon target for either 2030 or 2045 has a large element of risk as the council does not currently have sufficient funding or powers to achieve delivery of a zero carbon target for the whole borough. Previous research has indicated that the council’s estate only accounts for 3% of the borough’s carbon emissions so much of the action required will be reliant on others.

**7. Appendices and Background Documents**

Appendix letter	Title
	None

<b>Background documents</b>
Sutton Environment Strategy 2019-2025

<b>Audit Trail</b>		
Version	Final	Date: 11 July 2019
<b>Consultation with other officers</b>		
Finance	Yes	Miguel Fernandez
Legal	No	N/A
Equality Impact Assessment required?	No	N/A

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