

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	8 January 2020
Report Title	Annual Climate and Ecological Emergency Progress Report
Cabinet Member	Cllr Tim Valentine, Cabinet Member for the Environment
SMT Lead	David Clifford, Head of Policy, Communications and Customer Service
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	Janet Hill, Climate Change Officer
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To note progress

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 On June 26th Swale Borough Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency setting ourselves challenging targets to achieve net zero carbon for the council by 2025 and net zero carbon across the borough by 2030.
- 1.2 Part of the declaration requires an annual progress report to be taken to Council in January each year.
- 1.3 This is the first annual report covering the activities undertaken towards achieving our targets in the first six months after the declaration.

2 Background

- 2.1 Since the Spring of 2019 councils across the UK and beyond have been declaring climate emergencies of varying types and ambition. To date 265/408 (65%) of District, County, Unitary & Metropolitan Councils, and eight Combined Authorities/City Regions, have declared a Climate Emergency. (Source: <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/list-of-councils/>)
- 2.2 One of the first things the newly elected council did after the May 2019 local elections was to develop a Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration motion which was passed unanimously on 26th June.
- 2.3 Swale has set the most ambitious targets in Kent to achieve net zero carbon by 2025 as an organisation and by 2030 as a borough.
- 2.4 Our policies and strategies are being reviewed, changes will be made as necessary to achieve net zero carbon across the borough by 2030 An action plan is in development, as required by the declaration, and will be taken to Council in

April 2020.

3 Proposals

3.1 That progress is noted.

3.2 A full report can be found at Appendix I

Progress highlights

3.3 A cross service area steering group of key councillors and officers has been set up and meets regularly to progress actions

3.4 The Carbon Trust has been appointed to analyse our own estate and develop an action plan to achieve net zero carbon by 2025 Two workshops have been run by the Carbon Trust. Current recommendations include electrification of our heat sources, installation of on-site solar PV, and the roll out of electric vehicles (new leases are under consideration now).

3.5 A Special Projects Fund has been set up to fund projects which will include those that help to tackle the emergency.

3.6 Swale's Air Quality Action Plan was approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). A clean air zone feasibility study is planned, and we are working with schools close to AQMAs to promote sustainable travel. We have developed an air quality planning technical guide.

3.7 We have lobbied local MPs and the Prime Minister. We received a very helpful response from the then Minister for Business Energy and Clean Growth, confirming that the declaration of a climate emergency would be a material consideration for planning. We are also able to set our own targets for the use of renewables in new developments.

3.8 A joint bid with borough wide partners has been submitted to the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund. This fund will enable local communities to take action to tackle the climate emergency. This bid includes projects on habitats and biodiversity by Kent Wildlife Trust, water quality by the Medway and Swale Estuary Partnership, community energy projects led by Orchard Community Energy, food wastage reduction and education projects by Children and Families and speed reduction projects led by 20's Plenty to promote active travel.

3.9 An audit of the council's purchases of single-use plastic use has been undertaken and elimination or replacement of products is being instigated. For example, the plastic envelopes used to post papers to members will be replaced by a compostable envelope which can be put in the food waste bin or composted at home. We are working closely with Plastic Free Faversham to reduce the amount of single-use plastic used at events.

- 3.10 A fuel and water poverty outreach service has been developed as a way of reaching our more vulnerable residents to help them reduce bills and carbon emissions. The service provider will be appointed in February.
- 3.11 A joint bid with Arriva has been submitted to Defra to acquire an electric bus to serve of the 333/334 bus route (Faversham and Sheerness to Maidstone).
- 3.12 A network of EV chargers are being installed in council car parks. Charge points are already available in Sittingbourne (Swallows and Swale House car parks, and the MSCP), new charge points will be installed in the Central Car Park, Faversham and Rose Street, Sheerness in summer 2020.
- 3.13 The Planning Committee has successfully requested more renewable energy and energy-efficiency measures to be included in new developments. Highlights include 2 x 50Kw rapid chargers, a number of fast chargers, solar PV and - use of air-source heat pumps to heat a care home, hotel and supermarket at Perry Court, Faversham.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 An alternative option would be to carry on with business as usual, taking no notice of the Carbon Trust’s recommendations. This would mean our own emissions would decline more slowly than required to meet our 2025 targets as declared in the emergency. Borough wide taking no action would have similar consequences with a failure to meet 2030 targets. We would also risk reputational damage.

To do nothing is not a valid alternative.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Steering Group, Cabinet member for the Environment the Deputy Cabinet member for the Environment and the Deputy Cabinet member for Planning have all been involved in the development of this report.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Progress on the declaration will support the delivering improved quality of life and delivering the council of tomorrow priorities
Financial, Resource and Property	This report is for noting but going forward activities to address the declaration will have financial implications and these will be addressed through Special Project Fund funding and through the revenue and capital budget processes.

Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Sustainability	The progress made to date supports improving our environment and contributes to the development of a more sustainable council and borough.
Health and Wellbeing	Improvements to the environment and sustainability have tangible health and wellbeing benefits.
risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix I: Annual Climate and Ecological Emergency Progress Report

8 Background Papers

Motion to full council 26th June 2019

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g2156/Public%20reports%20pack%2026th-Jun-2019%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>