

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 18/01/2020

Wards: All Wards

Subject: Climate Delivery Plan – Year 1

Lead officer: Director of Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee

Lead member: Cabinet member for Regeneration, Housing and Climate Change, Martin Whelton

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Recommendations:

- A. That Cabinet adopts the Climate Delivery Plan – Year 1
 - B. That delegated authority is given to the Director of Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee in consultation with Cllr Martin Whelton, the Cabinet member for Regeneration, Housing and Climate Change to make minor amendments.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This Delivery Plan sets out how Merton Council will work towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change, within the borough and within the Council's buildings and services in 2021.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan [1] was adopted by Council in November 2020. Cabinet was appointed to oversee its implementation.
- 2.2. One of the commitments in Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan was the formation of a Delivery Plan which is updated annually and is able to monitor progress. *Section 1* of the Delivery Plan sets the scope of the plan, which covers major activities that the Council intends to do to support emissions reductions within the borough, and within the Council's buildings and services in 2021. *Section 2* considers the Council's progress in meeting its part in Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan in relation to the pace and scale of change needed. It uses a set of indicators to serve as a baseline from which future years can be compared. *Section 3* takes wider factors into account, to assess the likelihood of meeting the net-zero targets.
- 2.3. To support delivery, 8 workstreams have been set up within the Council. These cover all areas, and actions are benchmarked against progress needed to be in keeping with our net-zero targets. *Section 4* sets out the priority actions that we intend to take within these workstreams. It demonstrates our intention to expand climate considerations to every part of the Council. The main focus of Year 1 is to set firm foundations, from which action can grow both within the Council and within the borough.

- 2.4. Where action to reduce carbon emissions is already occurring, the plan seeks to accelerate action in keeping with the scale of change that is needed to meet our carbon reduction commitments. Examples where accelerated action has already taken place since the declaration of a climate emergency includes securing a 100% renewable electricity tariff for the Council, the consultation for 26 school streets this autumn, and the consultation for Merton's Local Plan; where key policies have been reviewed based on emerging evidence to support a net-zero carbon borough.
- 2.5. Where there has been an absence of activity to date, the Delivery Plan commits to investigate options for taking stronger action, and gain additional resource through lobbying or application for external funding. An example is our commitment to considering options to reduce emissions from existing and future procured services.
- 2.6. National Government, through the last 2 budgets, and the Government's newly announced 10 Point Environment Plan [2], have committed significant spend to boost low carbon activities and kick-start an economic recovery following the impacts of Covid. These include c£1bn to decarbonise public sector buildings [3] and £1.3bn to support electric charging infrastructure. These new funding opportunities tend to come with extremely short delivery deadlines, presenting new challenges for fully stretched staff to develop and deliver substantial capital projects at short notice without additional resource.
- 2.7. Because delivery of our net-zero targets is so dependent on the action of others, the plan seeks to significantly ramp up engagement through a comprehensive communications plan and the formation of a community-based Climate Action Group. To date, our success at engaging with under-represented groups has been lower than expected.
- 2.8. It may be appropriate to make minor changes to the Delivery Plan, for example to ensure TBC indicators are put in place, and where there are changes to delivery risks throughout the year. We seek delegated authority to the Director of Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee in consultation with Cllr Martin Whelton, the Cabinet member for Regeneration, Housing and Climate Change to make these minor amendments.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Option 1 - No Delivery Plan: This option would undermine a key commitment set out in Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan. Without a delivery plan, it would be harder to understand whether activity to reduce carbon emissions undertaken by Merton Council is focused where it will have the greatest impact.

Option 2 - A more ambitious plan: This is not a realistic option because the Delivery Plan presented represents the most ambitious plan that can be achieved within the Council's current resources, focused on the major transitions needed to achieve the net-zero carbon targets. Making a more ambitious plan would require additional staff and funding that is not currently available.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. The Delivery Plan operates under the long term framework of Merton's Climate Strategy and action plan, and uses the extensive consultation and evidence review that was undertaken through its development in 2019 and 2020.
- 4.2. The Delivery Plan is limited to fulfilling the Council's part of the Climate Strategy and Action Plan, so has been discussed extensively with Council officers and the Environment Subgroup of the Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. Whilst the net-zero targets may take decades to achieve, the Delivery Plan aims to operate within a single year, enabling delivery to be responsive to the many changes in funding, policy, innovation and markets. It is expected that priority actions set out in the Delivery Plan will be complete by December 2021.
- 5.2. The Delivery Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The updated plan will use the indicators and wider evidence to focus efforts which make the most significant impact towards meeting out net-zero targets.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. *Annex 4* of the Delivery Plan sets out all priority actions that the Council intends to take over the first year of implementation of the Climate Strategy and Action Plan. Officers responsible for the individual actions have confirmed that these can be carried without additional resources; notwithstanding the delivery risks identified.
- 6.2. *Section 4.1* of the Delivery plan considers the extent to which the actions committed to by the Council are sufficient with respect to the Council's responsibilities set out in the Climate Strategy and Action Plan. This is straightforward when considering the Council's action to reduce its own carbon emissions, but harder to judge when considering the Council's actions to support emissions reductions that need to be undertaken by others. This section does identify gaps in activity and /or funding that will need to be met in future years, but in most cases, the scale and timing of the funding need has not yet been identified; nor how these funding needs will be met.
- 6.3. *Section 3.1* also acknowledges funding gaps that the Council is not expected to fill but will be needed by others to meet the 2050 net-zero target. These include the additional capital costs to support low carbon retrofit of Merton's homes and non-residential buildings.
- 6.4. *Section 2.1* of the Delivery Plan estimates that £2.1m of Council spend was allocated to projects that reduced emissions inside and outside the Council in 2019/2020. Despite challenging financial conditions, spend on climate projects is predicted to increase in this financial year.

- 6.5. New capital schemes and additions to any existing capital schemes in relation to the climate change delivery plan will only be added to the approved capital programme as additional funding is identified.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There is no statutory requirement for Local Authorities to set climate targets, or produce a Climate Strategy or an Action Plan set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. Local Authorities are, however, obliged to be in keeping with the objectives of policies implemented by the Greater London Authority and National Government through obligations set out in grant funding agreements, under regulatory arrangements such as through air quality reviews and monitoring under the Environment Act 1995 and national planning law including the Planning Act 2008 and in development of local plans under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, where the local planning authority must have regard to national policies.
- 7.2. In order to carry out the investments and actions required of this report the Council must follow, where appropriate, the Council's contract standing orders and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 in relation to entering into public contracts. From December 31st 2020 this may include call-off contracts from existing frameworks and if tendered after 31st December 2020 will require publication of relevant notices on the new government service Find a Tender Service (FTS).
- 7.3. Conditions attaching to the letting of public contracts should be non-discriminatory and compliant with any applicable grant conditions.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. *Section 2* highlights that intended actions are consistent with the strategic approach set out in the Climate Strategy and Action Plan. These embody an ambition for action on climate to have wider community benefits and ensure that neither the effects of climate change, nor the costs of reducing emissions disproportionately affect the vulnerable or those less able to pay.
- 8.2. Workstream 8, considers Communication, outreach and LBM corporate procedure. Within this workstream, *Section 4.1* sets out our intention to support and empower communities to take action on climate through the development of a climate action group; in keeping with the key aims of Merton's community plan to increase social capital.
- 8.3. The spread of activity within the Delivery Plan makes it difficult to undertake a meaningful equality assessment of the plan as a whole. Individual equality assessments will be undertaken as individual actions form key policies and decisions.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. Delivery risks relating to annual priority actions have been assessed both at an individual level (*Annex 4 of the Delivery Plan*) and for the workstream as a whole (*in section 4.1*). These consider the likelihood that the action will take place and the impact this might have in the Council meeting its obligations set out in Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan.
- 10.2. *Section 3.1*, assesses the likelihood that the net-zero targets will be met, taking into account of the 2% of emissions that are the direct responsibility of the Council, actions taken by the Council to enable emission reduction for the borough target, and the wider financial, political, behavioural and market forces in play.
- 10.3. Risk management and health and safety measures for individual actions will be undertaken by the Officer responsible for the action.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Climate Change Delivery Plan – Year 1

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. [1] Merton Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/Draft%20Climate%20Strategy%20and%20Action%20Plan%20-%20Council%20V2.pdf>
- [2] Government's 10 point Environment Plan (November 2020)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution>
- [3] Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (October 2020)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme-psds>

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