

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	1 October 2019
Subject:	Notice of Motion On Climate Change
Report of:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

The Council's Constitution requires that, before a Notice of Motion is debated at a Council meeting, the Council must decide whether to discuss and determine it at that meeting or refer it without debate to a Committee for consideration. If the latter course of action is decided, then the Council must direct the Committee either to determine the Motion or consider it and make a recommendation back to Council.

At the meeting of the Council on 30 July 2019, a Notice of Motion on Climate Change was referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration and recommendation back to Council.

This report advises Council of the outcome of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's deliberations.

Recommendation:

To consider and determine the amended Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Cody and seconded by Councillor Softley, as set out below:

That the Council:

- **Declare a "Climate Emergency".**
- **Commit to doing all in its power to make Tewkesbury Borough Council offices carbon neutral by 2030.**
- **Expand the remit of the existing Flood Risk Management Group to deal with climate change matters with the following delegations to the Borough Solicitor in consultation with the Group:-**
 - i) **preparation of revised Terms of Reference to include an audit of the Council's current position, an action plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, funding and promotion of good practice throughout the borough including buildings that provide a public service, such as the Tewkesbury Leisure Centre; and**
 - ii) **membership of the Group, taking account of its wider role.**
- **Call upon central government to provide additional powers and resources to support local and national action towards the 2030 target.**

- **Commit to working with partners in Gloucestershire to achieve Countywide carbon neutrality aims.**
- **Report to Council by its meeting on 21 April 2020 at the latest with a detailed action plan for delivery.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

To comply with the Council's direction to consider the wording of the Climate Change Motion and make a recommendation back to Council.

Resource Implications:

The recommendation involves the expansion of the remit of an existing Working Group in order to avoid setting up a new Group requiring additional staff resources to support that Group. Any cost implications as a result of the action plan will be the subject of a further report.

Legal Implications:

None specifically arising from the consideration process of the Motion which is a matter of compliance with the Council's Constitution.

Risk Management Implications:

None specifically relating to the consideration process of dealing with a Notice of Motion but the subject of the Motion is very high profile on the national and international agenda.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The Motion sets out a series of actions with a report back to Council by the latest date of 21 April 2020. Progress to ensure this date is achieved will be monitored by the Working Group.

Environmental Implications:

Covered in the subject matter of the Motion.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 At the Council meeting on 30 July 2019, the following Notice of Motion was proposed and seconded:

Humans have already caused devastating climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;

In order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that we as species reduce our CO₂eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible;

Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm;

Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;

Tewkesbury Borough Council has already addressed the problem of single use plastics and has shown a strong commitment to recycling and sustainable transport but more needs to be done.

In Gloucestershire the consequences of no action include:

- Increased risk of flash flooding and the resulting damage to buildings, crops, farmland and infrastructure as a result of more extreme rainfall events.
- Health problems due to increased heat stress particularly for vulnerable adults and children.
- Increased costs associated with changes to crops and biodiversity.
- Higher energy costs.
- Crop failures associated with extreme heat, such as was experienced in 2018.

The County Council has already recognised more needs to be done and has created an additional cabinet role with responsibility for overseeing the authority's approach to prevention of, mitigation of, and adaptation of climate change.

The government believes that a shift to a very low carbon energy future represents the best course for the country's economic development while lowering the risk of fuel poverty and reducing air pollution.

In view of the above the Council is asked to:

- declare a "Climate Emergency".
- commit to doing all in its power to make Tewkesbury Borough Council carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions.
- set up a Working Group consisting of seven Members of the Council (to be nominated at this evening's meeting) to prepare a long-term plan to achieve this, together with any initial budgetary requirements, to be reported back to the Executive Committee in October.
- call upon central government to provide additional powers and resources to support local and national action towards the 2030 target.
- commit to working with partners in Gloucestershire to achieve Countywide carbon neutrality aims.

1.2 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Council determined that the Motion be deferred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration with a recommendation being referred back to Council.

2.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

2.1 A special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was convened to take place on 13 August to specifically consider the Notice of Motion on Climate Change that had been referred by Council.

2.2 The proposer and seconder of the Motion were present at the meeting and, although unable to vote, were given the opportunity to present their Motion to the Committee.

2.3 As part of the consideration process, the Chair suggested some amendments to the Motion as set out below aimed at providing clarity, a clear direction on the way forward and maximising and building upon existing arrangements:

The Council is asked to:

- Declare a “Climate Emergency”.
- Commit to doing all in its power to make Tewkesbury Borough Council **offices** carbon neutral by 2030 ~~taking into account both production and consumption emissions.~~
- ~~Set up a Working Group consisting of seven Members of the Council (to be nominated at this evening’s meeting) to prepare a long term plan to achieve this, together with any initial budgetary requirements, to be reported back to the Executive Committee in October.~~ **Expand the remit of the existing Flood Risk Management Group to deal with climate change matters with the following delegations to the Borough Solicitor in consultation with the Group:-**
 - i) preparation of revised Terms of Reference to include an audit of the Council’s current position, an action plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, funding and promotion of good practice throughout the borough including buildings that provide a public service, such as the Tewkesbury Leisure Centre; and***
 - ii) membership of the Group, taking account of its wider role.***
- Call upon central government to provide additional powers and resources to support local and national action towards the 2030 target.
- Commit to working with partners in Gloucestershire to achieve Countywide carbon neutrality aims.

The proposer of the Motion indicated that she was prepared to accept these amendments and incorporate them within her Motion as she believed it was important to make a start and was keen to compromise in order to reach an agreement and move forward.

2.4 During the discussion which took place on the amended Motion, a Member expressed concern that 2030 was a long time to achieve carbon neutrality for one building but the Chair clarified that this was a target only and he was sure the Council would strive to achieve this as quickly as possible. In order to ensure that work was progressed as quickly as possible a further amendment was put forward, and accepted by the proposer of the Motion, to be included in her Motion as set out below:

- Report to Council by its meeting on 21 April 2020 at the latest with a detailed action plan for delivery.

2.5 The amended Motion, as set out in Paragraphs 2.3 and 4 above, now agreed by the proposer, received the unanimous support of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be recommended to Council for adoption.

2.6 A full copy of the approved Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 Not applicable.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 To form part of the audit to be undertaken should the Motion be approved.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 As above.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 As above.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 As above.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 As above.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 Council on 30 July 2019.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Special) on 13 August 2019.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: 1. Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Special) on 13 August 2019.