

CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE PANEL

2nd November 2021 – 5pm to 6.30pm

Location: Via Teams

Notes

Introductions

Cllr Barnes (Chair) noted that there had been developments in respect of Government policy and that the COP26 conference had started.

UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)

Dominic Millen gave an overview of what it is about:

- Annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference. First held in Berlin in 1995, this is the 26 edition.
- It brings together global leaders and other stakeholders to implement the Convention. This year the UK and Italy have the presidency.
- The Conference of Parties (COP) is the decision making body of the UNFCCC and is part of the wider event.
- As well as core diplomatic sessions, there are a range of supporting events.
- The focus will be on progress since the Paris Agreement (ratified in 2016), which aimed to keep the rise in global temperatures to well below 2 degrees Celsius (ideally less than 1.5).
- The intention is that there will be agreements around specific areas as well as an overarching pact which government's commit to.

Government Climate Policy Update

Dominic Millen provided a summary of the Net Zero and Heat & Buildings strategies:

- The Net Zero Strategy (NZS) sets out approach to getting UK to net zero by 2050 and is underpinned by four core principles:
 - Biggest polluters pay most.
 - Deep cost reductions in low carbon tech.
 - Most vulnerable are protected by Govt.
 - Retain consumer choice.
- Has proposals under themes including power, fuel supply, heat, buildings, transport, natural resources, waste and gases.
- Estimate is that an average of £50 to £60 billion is required per annum to fund the NZS, with most of this investment to come from the private sector.
- Government will create an attractive investment environment and take a strategic policy approach to facilitate private funding.
- The NZS includes principles to underpin the approach to consumer choice such as making the green choice affordable and easiest.
- Indicates that local authorities have a key role to play in delivering net zero, with most of the areas (eg decarbonising buildings) aligning with the Council's Climate Action Plan.

The Heat and Buildings Strategy focuses on particular themes, with core policy principles:

- Accelerate 'no- and low-regrets' action now (such as by making fabric improvements to buildings).
- Take a whole-buildings and whole-system approach to minimise costs of decarbonisation.
- Provide long-term signals to investment by setting requirements but allow flexibility of approach.
- Target support to enable action for those in most need.
- Innovation driving down costs, improving options and informing future decisions.

There are positives in the strategies, such as the recognition of the scale of the challenge, although these could be outweighed by potential negatives, for example if an unsuitable delivery model is adopted or short term policies do not align with achieving net zero.

It was noted:

- Consumer choice might need to be balanced against the reality of climate change and the need for action.
- The Council should look for opportunities to align with key areas in the Government's strategies.
- Delivery of large scale programmes and the current capacity gap with green skills are challenges that should not be underestimated.

Reducing Emissions from Council Buildings

Mark Bradbury gave an update on progress with the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme:

- 11 Corporate buildings improved with works including Air Source Heat Pumps (circa £2m investment), Solar Photovoltaic (solar panels which are already being installed), insulation and controls.
- Funding also secured for pilot project connecting Energetik to an existing site, although details are still to be confirmed.

There will also be energy efficiency works delivered as part of the Build the Change programme and the corporate asset management programme. In the next six months the plan is to prepare a longer term programme for buildings decarbonisation.

Updates

- Communications – Huge range of climate action topics being covered with social media tiles and graphics supported by news items. Has led to strong public engagement.
- Local Area Energy Plan – Being progressed with a consultant due to be brought onboard in the next few weeks.
- Retrofit London – Action Plan has now been launched:
<https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/download/file/fid/28083>

AOB

None raised.