

10th July 2019

**Policy, Resources and Economic Development
Committee**

Development of a Local Green Agenda

Report of: *Greg Campbell, Director of Operations*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The following report provides information on the green initiatives the Council are presently undertaking and in doing so advises that a joined up green agenda for the borough would be far more beneficial.
- 1.2 The report also begins to explore the legislation, government targets and other work that is being considered to improve the worlds environmental climate. This includes work currently being undertaken by the Council and also highways work other organisations are putting into place.
- 1.3 The report also suggests opportunities to begin work to deliver some immediate environmental benefits. These could start with immediate effect if resources are identified. This work would include the recent approved motion relating to developing and implementation car charging points in the borough.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To agree to develop a Green Agenda that is both specific to the way the Council undertake its duties and will positively affect the Borough and a further report be made to Policy Resources and Economic Development Committee later this year.**
- 2.2 To agree to investigate the potential projects listed within this report to work towards a better environment which will work with the development of a green agenda.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The following report enables members to determine whether to progress some immediate projects to improve the Councils work towards delivering improved environmental options within the borough and work towards developing a borough wide Green Agenda.
- 3.2 The report considers the work the Council presently undertake that encourages environmental improvements which include reducing the carbon footprint, improve the use of reusables and promote good practice.
- 3.3 This report brings information together to enable consideration as to how this Council can approach the 'green issue' in order for it to:
- be more proactive,
 - better consolidated,
 - be in a position to embrace new technologies or advancements,
 - have a direction that the council considers appropriate for a local authority
 - demonstrate leadership in this area for the local community and other businesses
 - produce a clear direction which other policies and decisions have to consider
 - to agree to some immediate beneficial projects and
 - develop and embed a long-term green agenda that supports national and global ideas.
- 3.4 The green agenda can include many 'things' including the push to reduce the carbon footprint or the need to be more sustainable which are phrases used to promote a more environmentally considerate society and often underpin green agendas
- 3.5 There have been a number of documents and statements made around this industry including the Paris Agreement 2015, the recent Government 25 Year Environment Plan and the commitment by Government through

the Climate Change Act to deliver the target of Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050.

3.6 In order to understand what a green agenda could cover the latest 25-year environmental plan by government includes the following headings :

- Clean air
- Clean and plentiful water
- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Reducing the risks of harm from environmental hazards
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently
- Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Minimising waste
- Managing exposure to chemicals
- Enhancing biosecurity

3.7 It is clear there is much work going on in the environmental improvement area and plans by other organisations are in place to speed up the trajectory to become a better user of natural resources, improve the air quality, reduce use of plastics and those we use we can recycle.

4 Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

4.4 From initial investigations I have been able to list some of the work the Council has undertaken that supports the green agenda. For example:

4.2 The revamped Town hall will have a better energy performance (EPC) due to the following measures:

- New windows
- Increased insulation
- Air cooling circulation system
- New efficient gas boilers
- In addition 3 electric charging points for vehicles will be installed in the car park

ICT have made improvements including:

- moving the Councils data centre to the cloud removing the need for power, cooling etc at Town Hall.
- Using thin clients that take less power for the desktop

- provided infrastructure for agile working that:
 - enabling improved and reduced travel,
 - reduced the need for office space reducing use of electricity and power therefore reducing the carbon footprint.

Parking

- use Ego Power Plus range of maintenance tools, strimmer, leaf blower etc for car park maintenance replacing petrol fuelled tools

The Depot

- Carry out green waste collections
- Amended rounds to reduce trips and reduce carbon emissions
- Have procured two battery powered vehicles

4.5 The Council have and will introduce policies and strategies that support the environmental agenda. These documents include but are not exclusive to:

Local Development Plan

Through the local plan, new policies will be introduced which will ensure the green agenda is at the forefront of any future development. Please see Appendix A for a list of the policies drawn from the LDP and Planning

Building Control

- Building Regulations will seek the introduction of a framework for Net Zero Carbon Buildings' published by the UK **Green** Building Council (GBC) who stated that:
 - "More than 1/2 of a dwelling's carbon footprint is created before the first occupants move in

4.6 As we know there are also other green initiatives, agendas and regulations that the government and others have introduced. This information should be considered if we are to develop a consolidated approach to how we tackle our own carbon footprint. These include documents such as:

- Strategy for Waste and disposal December 2018.
- Green Infrastructure strategy – Essex County Council
- Essex Highways Information and implementation of electrical charging points for vehicles across Essex
- Government Agenda to go Carbon Neutral by 2040

4.7 Following consideration of the information we have been able to gather, it is clear that there is a lot of good work going on and there is far more potentially the Council could do. Especially if we do 'tap' into what is already available and identify grants or schemes we can also work with.

4.8 However, the Council's approach at present is disjointed whilst still achieving some good outcomes. It is therefore considered that a deep review of the work we undertake is completed, the outside influences be brought together, and a formal green agenda be drafted for Brentwood Borough Council.

4.9 In order to develop a green agenda, research is required which will include:

- The development of a clear understanding of the objectives,
- Identify the targets of a local green agenda for Brentwood Borough Council
- Review what we are already aware of and doing to compliment the proposed green agenda

4.10 What are the baseline figures including the health indicators for Brentwood residents:-

- Consider the important areas to the borough
- Consider where improvements are most necessary and
- Develop an action plan to identify the various pieces of work that will need to be completed to deliver a green agenda

4.12 This will need to be costed and communicated. Figure 1 Demonstrates high level path to developing a green agenda.



Fig 1. Development To Green Agenda

- 4.13 The Council also need to appreciate that it does not have the expertise in-house to develop a comprehensive 'Green Agenda', this is something that needs to be considered professionally by experts who can guide us. The Council would therefore need to engage with a group(s) or individual(s) to assess what is required and how much this would cost to develop.
- 4.14 Opportunities are available, Southend Unitary Council have a designated Green Agenda Unit who have been delivering against their green agenda for many years and potentially an authority we can discuss our needs with. Further there is the Woodland Trust and the EELGA who have also offered assistance to develop our schemes. Before we necessarily engage with these groups it will be important to determine what we want to achieve?
- 4.15 Once the Council has a clear strategy and Policy in place the organisation will be able to start to bid for grants to assist us to deliver. Something we understand Southend have been very successful at in the past.

What can we do right now?

- 4.16 Recently on the 26th June Ordinary Council agreed a motion to investigate the installation of electric charging stations.

"This Council resolves to investigate the possibility of installing electric charging stations for electric powered vehicles at various strategic positions within the Borough. As technology advances towards 2030, where the Government had decided only electric vehicles will be permitted on our roads, it may not be just charging points required, but a facility to exchange fully charged units".

4.17 Therefore, the direction of travel has been set and it would potentially be incorrect at this stage to wait for a full green agenda to be developed which could take some time before any work is undertaken. Therefore, below is a list of potential projects the Council could undertake whilst the development of a green agenda takes place:

- To seek to improve the level of EPC in Council General Fund Properties to 'B' through a programme of pre-planned maintenance
- That any procurement of any Council vehicles should consider an ECO alternative
- Seek to enable the introduction of paid charging points into 5% of Council owned and operated car parks. In doing so engage with companies that will be able to make their provision cost neutral to the Council
- Encourage both home owners and businesses to take up the government funding which assist with the installation of electrical charging points
- Investigate and seek the possibility to introduce on-street residential charge point schemes

5 Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The Council has some good pieces of environmental work that are undertaken but it is felt this work is unco-ordinated and could achieve much more with a joined-up approach.
- 5.2 To stop any future maverick decisions which may not deliver against a green agenda that the Council could introduce.
- 5.3 Set out long term ambitions and targets with the wider work that is being undertaken, for example the 25 Year Government Plan.
- 5.4 Having a green agenda will assist the Council to develop and apply for funding for green initiatives.
- 5.5 Be able to start initiatives now that will support any long-term green agenda.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 All departments within the council.
- 6.2 Future consultation will be key, and this will form part of the workplan that will need to be developed in line with a delivery plan.

7 References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 Support economic growth and sustainable development.
- 7.2 Consider how Council assets can be utilised to promote sustainable development in the Borough.
- 7.3 Implement a planning framework to guide and enable infrastructure delivery.

8 Implications

Financial Implications

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- 8.1 There is no direct budget associated to the Green Agenda. Therefore, any costs associated with the proposed implementations as outlined within this report, would need to be met from existing budgets.
- 8.2 The expectation of the Green Agenda needs to be balanced and aligned with the Councils financial pressures. Any costs associated in developing a Green Agenda, that cannot be met from within existing budgets will need to be put forward as an in year Growth bid and/or a growth bid for 2020/21 Budget Setting. In turn, this process will determine whether the budget can be granted and will be reported accordingly.
- 8.3 All external funding opportunities should be utilised in order to reduce the cost to the Council of implementing proposed schemes and projects. Identification of potential funding opportunities available will aid any growth bid proposals.

Legal Implications

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- 8.4 The recommendations outlined in this report are lawful and will help to secure compliance with the Council's statutory obligations and Government policy.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.5 None.

- 9 Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

<https://www.essexhighways.org/Getting-Around/Driving/Electric-car.aspx>

Green Infrastructure Strategy -

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Strategic-Environment/Pages/Our-natural-environment.aspx>

- 10 Appendices to this report**

Appendix A – Planning Policies

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