



Meeting: Climate Emergency Committee

Date: 7 October 2019

Agenda: Item 20

Purpose: The Council has declared a Climate Emergency. This document supports the integration of responsiveness to the climate emergency into the structure of the Council. It helps lay the down the framework for the development of a formal policy and related action.

Author: Shona Bendix

Full Council

Full Council is the guardian of its Climate Emergency Declaration and any related policies that it chooses to progress. Responding to the climate emergency will take full account of the need to nurture and increase the beneficial natural environment and improve the positive interaction of human beings with their environment. The Council considers that there is both a climate and nature emergency and that the two are interlinked and part of its activities will include the continued fulfilment of its duty to consider biodiversity in relevant decisions.

The Council will develop a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan within two years of the date of agreement to this document and its activities will be carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council will prioritise those matters within its control e.g. its own facilities and services.

Full Council will ensure that actions are taken to respond positively to the climate emergency. In doing so, it will take account of other important matters including:

- The obligation, inherent in having made a Climate Emergency Declaration, to consider future generations in Lowestoft, and not just current taxpayers;
- Other or linked ethical matter such as fair trading practices, and local employment and production;
- Its statutory obligations, including its responsibility for the safeguarding of public money;
- The requirement to act only within its powers;
- The need to act and respond proportionately and appropriately; and
- The need to properly understand the impact on the environment and nature and how to achieve a meaningful and sustainable result before decisions are made

Climate Emergency Committee

This Committee has been created by the Council to ensure that its Climate Emergency Declaration becomes integral to all relevant activities of the Council. To achieve this the Committee's actions shall include in relation to the Climate Emergency Declaration:

- Recommending and, at least annually, reviewing the Council's policy
- Recommending means of assessing measurements of current performance in order to help establish the level of success under the Council's policy
- Recommending and reviewing related actions by the Council and relevant Committees
- Exploring and researching measures to ameliorate climate impacts and optimise beneficial natural environments
- Recommending responses on any significant policy consultations directly affecting Lowestoft

- Considering any climate emergency action by local groups and public service providers which might assist the Council's climate emergency activities
- Liaising with any Climate Action Groups supported by Council

Planning and Environment Committee

This Committee recognises that it plays an important role in delivering climate protection and improvement measures through creating appropriate planning policies and influencing others, including the local planning authority.

During relevant decisions on planning applications, infrastructure and consultations (including on any revisions of the Local Plan), this Committee shall:

- Consider biodiversity
- Support new or improved renewable energy.
- Supports alternatives to car use e.g. walking, cycling and public transport, and encourage efficient car use, including through appropriate car parking provision, car-sharing, differential car-parking charges, and the use of electric cars.
- Encourage the management of land for nature and an increase in tree cover
- Resist the use of natural open space for development and encourage reuse of brownfield sites
- Support homes which are energy efficient, nature friendly and located close to public transport and amenities

The Committee shall also:

- Actively support robust planning and neighbourhood plan policies
- Where information on environmental impacts of development is absent, responses to planning applications will state that the planning authority has failed to provide this essential information

Neighbourhood Planning Sub-Committee

The development and any review of the Council's Neighbourhood Plan shall take account of the Council's climate emergency and the above matters. Additionally, the Sub-Committee shall ensure that the Plan:

- Designates sites for trees, renewable energy and nature restoration.
- Designates safe walking and cycle routes.
- Requires new homes to be energy efficient and nature-friendly and located close to public transport and amenities.
- Provides for flexibility on affordable home allocation to accommodate fewer units where units with greater environmental credentials can be developed but at a higher cost.

Finance and Governance

This Committee recognises that its work is fundamental to the Council's ability to respond to the climate emergency. Sustainability and financially robust services and risk management are essential to the Council's approach of acting on the climate emergency, increasing efficiency and reducing undue use of resources and waste. Some 'green' initiatives and products will cost more money and the Council will wish to accommodate this expenditure within its existing budget where possible. Its actions will include ensuring:

- Suitable risk management is in place as reasonably needed to safeguard against adverse environmental impacts arising from the Council's activities or assets
- Suitable emergency and business continuity planning are in place
- Efficient and effective procurement takes place including, where relevant, joint, bulk and local purchasing and investment where this gains environmental benefits
- Appropriate disposal of items no longer reasonably usable by the Council
- Contract arrangements are established or reviewed, where reasonably possible, to ensure they include appropriate environmental measures and safeguards
- Due consideration of climate emergency is integrated within office arrangements e.g. optimum reuse and recycling practices

- Water and energy use is as efficient and environmentally friendly as is reasonably possible, using Salix loans where needed
- Appropriate investment in low risk, sustainable banks or investment funds
- Appropriate recommendations to Council on its budget and policies e.g. encouraging leisure and use of open spaces and on creating sustainable assets and services
- Ensuring efficient energy use in public lavatories and other buildings
- Lobby for Government support to town and parish councils to assist them with the switch to carbon neutrality and environmental friendliness.

Events and Communications Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee has an important role in ensuring that:

- Actions under the Climate Emergency Declaration apply to events on its land
- Waste and environmental damage are avoided/reduced e.g. reduced reliance on plastic
- An appropriate amount of communication resource is applied to promoting practical action

Standing Orders Working Group

This Working Group's review and recommendations on standing orders will include whether there are any lawful improvement which might remove barriers to or better facilitate progressing climate emergency actions

Assets, Inclusion and Development

This Committee has an important role to play in making recommendations on the management of open spaces and buildings, where relevant, including through:

- Considering biodiversity
- Supporting new or improved renewable energy
- Supporting alternatives to car use e.g. walking, cycling and public transport, and encourages efficient car use, including through appropriate car parking provision, car-sharing, differential car-parking charges, and the use of electric cars
- Encouraging the management of land for nature and an increase in tree cover
- Ensuring an optimum level of low-water use, perennial, disease resistant plants within a mix of planting which encourages biodiversity
- Encouraging Friends Of groups to incorporate relevant practices and actions
- Encouraging walking, cycling, leisure activities and exploration of the outdoors by all ages and abilities

Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee has an important role in examining closely how its recommendations and actions can ensure that the Climate Emergency Declaration is properly considered, not least in such matters as planting, street furniture and land use

Market and Trading Working Group

This Working Group has an important role in examining closely how its recommendations and actions can ensure that the Climate Emergency Declaration is properly considered, not least in such matters as management of waste and littering and the products on offer from stallholders.