

## **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

**26 NOVEMBER 2019**

### **UPDATE ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Simon Clist and Cllr Luke Taylor.

**Responsible Officer:** Andrew Busby, Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets.

**Reason for Report:** To provide Members with an update on progress made with establishing a Carbon Footprint for the Council's operational activities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** For Members to note that it is necessary to establish a carbon emissions baseline, in order that the Council can accurately measure carbon reductions in future years.

**Financial Implications:** The direct financial implication associated with this report is the cost associated with engaging the expertise of the University of Exeter, at a one off cost of circa £6k and a further £5k per annum to become a member of the South West Energy and Environment Group (SWEEG).

**Legal Implications:** Full Council has declared a Climate Emergency and as part of that commitment the Council is to produce a carbon footprint, the advice that we have used to determine our carbon footprint is the Environmental Reporting Guidelines published by HM Government in March 2019.

**Risk Assessment:** If the Council does not establish its baseline it will not be in a position to measure progress towards being carbon-neutral.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** There are no equality impact assessment implications associated with this report.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** Environment – Reducing our carbon footprint.

**Impact on Climate Change:** This report links to a background paper that lists some of the Energy Saving Measures (ECM's) already implemented by the Council to help reduce its carbon footprint, reduce dependency on fossil fuels and utilise renewable energy sources where sustainable.

#### **1.0 Introduction:**

This report outlines our progress following the Council's Declaration of a Climate Emergency and the commitment to produce an accurate carbon footprint for the Council's activities. This is a complex piece of work and it is vital that it is performed accurately as it will create a baseline, against which the Council will be measuring our journey towards carbon neutrality. The Council have engaged with other local authorities to establish a joined up approach and Exeter University have been commissioned to assist us with this piece of work, the Council will also become a member of SWEEG (South West Energy & Environment Group).

- 1.1 The Council has declared a climate emergency and aims to become carbon neutral by 2030. Carbon neutrality is a term used to describe the actions that organisations, businesses and individuals take to remove as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as each puts in to it. The overall goal of carbon neutrality is to achieve a zero carbon footprint.
- 1.2 The definition of a carbon footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organization, or community. A carbon footprint is measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and CO<sub>2</sub>e is calculated by multiplying the emissions of each of the greenhouse gases by its 100 year global warming potential (GWP).
- 1.3 Having a net zero carbon footprint, refers to achieving net zero carbon dioxide emissions by balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal (often through carbon offsetting) or simply eliminating carbon emissions altogether (the transition to a post-carbon economy). It is used in the context of carbon dioxide-releasing processes associated with transportation, energy production, agriculture and commercial/industrial processes.
- 1.4 To become carbon neutral we need to accurately measure our carbon footprint and create a baseline against which future changes can be measured, the assessment needs to establish a baseline from which to measure the reductions that we plan to make, and make informed recommendations to members.

## **2.0 Scope of emissions:**

The baseline exercise will detail three scopes of reporting as below:

- Scope 1 (Direct emissions): Emissions from activities owned or controlled (as previously defined in organisational boundary) by our organisation that release emissions into the atmosphere.
- Scope 2 (Energy indirect): Emissions released into the atmosphere associated with our consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling.
- Scope 3 (Other indirect): Emissions that are a consequence of our actions, which occur at sources which we do not own or control and which are not classed as scope 2 emissions.
  - Accounting is harder as information resides with other organisations.
  - Generally involves more estimation and generic information.

**3.0 Annex A** - Please refer to the attached model that explains the above in illustrative form.

#### **4.0 Establishing a Baseline:**

In order to accurately establish a baseline for our carbon footprint, the Council has commissioned expert advice and assistance from the University of Exeter. Researchers are familiar with the national guidelines and Mid Devon District Council have joined other District Councils to have a consistent approach on the scopes where possible, the scope of work includes but not limited to:

- Defining boundaries and what is in/out of scope
- Gathering data
- Analysing data
- Spreadsheet creation
- Report writing

To establish a carbon footprint the commission will include five stages.

#### **4.1 Stage 1 - Defining the boundaries:**

Scope 1 & 2 emissions: We are clear on what is in and out of scope and our assumptions will therefore need to be clearly stated.

#### **4.2 Stage 2 - Gathering data:**

This is data that we are collecting; we need to identify and collate, much of which will involve identifying our property portfolio, the energy consumption from these premises, plus business mileage etc. Gathering data for scope 3 emissions is more complex and time consuming. The University will guide us on the data requirements and the appropriateness of any assumptions that we have to make.

#### **4.3 Stage 3 - Analysing data:**

This stage will involve the use of data conversion factors to ensure that we have our data in the correct format to publish in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. The University will produce tables and graphs using the data collected, which will contribute towards the final report.

#### **4.4 Stage 4 - Spreadsheet creation:**

The University will create and format a spreadsheet used with other authorities for capturing our carbon emissions and calculate the conversion factors that are relevant to each type of emission.

#### **4.5 Stage 5 - Report writing:**

The Council will prepare a further report on the data collected as part of this exercise. We can interpret the data and identify where we can have the greatest impact. We can consider phasing mitigations and adaptations to enable discussions on what we can do to aim to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

## **5.0 Next Steps:**

5.1 Once our carbon footprint is established we can begin to refine our ambitions through an Action Plan and begin to predict with some accuracy the costs associated with our plans and the period over which we will be reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and hence our carbon footprint.

5.2 We also need to consider a more formal structure for contributing towards the considerable workload of becoming a carbon neutral Council.

5.3 All Council business service plans will need to reflect climate change as a new corporate priority and should include coverage of what each service are doing to progress the climate change agenda in their area of responsibility.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Establishing a carbon footprint is not an end in itself, it is the start of being able to identify and deliver carbon reductions. The results of the exercise will be complete prior to the end of the calendar year.

**Contact for more Information:** Andrew Busby, Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets.

**Circulation of the Report:** Cllr Luke Taylor, Cllr Simon Clist, Councillor Barry Warren.

**Background papers:** Previous report Environment PDG 'Update on Climate Emergency Declaration' dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019.