

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
NOTICE OF MOTION - 26 APRIL 2022

Context

On Wednesday 18th September 2019, Waverley Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency.

The first draft of the Climate Emergency Action Plan was produced in March 2020. Following further detailed discussion and discussion across all areas of the council, Waverley's Strategic Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2030 and the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy was approved by the council's Executive on 1st December 2020. This brought together input from all Council services and the wider public through a consultation that took place between September and October 2020.

The subsequent establishment of the council's Climate Emergency Board and ongoing work by officers across the council led to the most recent iteration of the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan going through the Overview and Scrutiny Process and onto the Executive and Full Council.

Background

It is noteworthy, in the light of the development of the Waverley Borough Council Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (outlined above), that Climate Emergency UK has ranked the Action Plans of all councils in the UK based on a comprehensive set of criteria developed by Friends of The Earth, Centre for Alternative Technology, Ashden and APSE energy.

In this ranking, Waverley is ranked as the highest in Surrey and the fifth highest district in the UK. Please see:

<https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/scoring/district/>

Our ranking in this national league table is a real credit to the priority that the council has accorded to plans to do our bit to tackle the Climate Emergency and to the work of the dedicated Sustainability Team and officers across all service areas of the council.

While Waverley clearly does have a robust Carbon Neutrality Action Plan, it is now the case that around 325 of the 409 local authorities across the UK have climate action plans (Guardian, Thursday 27th January 2022), many of which will share the frustrations experienced in Waverley that we often find that there is insufficient funding available from the government to undertake some of our more ambitious plans.

It is clear that in future years, actions taken by the council will be scored as well as the robustness of the plans. While this will, in part, be dependent on the will of the council and the priority accorded to tackling climate change, it will be significantly dependent on funding. We, as an Executive, have often discussed how the government has consistently ignored cross-party attempts to secure funding for councils with action plans for a trajectory to carbon neutrality.

From the position of being a council with a clear trajectory to net zero carbon, we are in a position to call for the introduction of legislation to fund councils with plans to reduce their carbon footprint. It is clear that what is needed is a framework which ensures that, where a council has a robust and costed climate emergency action plan showing a trajectory to net zero carbon emissions, there is grant funding provided by the government to cover the cost of introducing the measures in the plan. This lies behind the motion which follows, calling for immediate legislation to provide funding for councils with robust and costed action plans for carbon reduction trajectories by means of a 100% government grant.

Motion

Waverley Borough Council **notes that:**

- 197 countries, including the UK agreed the Glasgow Climate Pact at the end of the COP26 talks held in the UK between 31st October and 12th November;
- the UK government's Sixth Carbon Budget set in law a climate change target, proposing to cut emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels;
- an overwhelming majority of councils in the UK have now declared a climate emergency;
- around 80% of local authorities across the UK now have climate action plans;
- many councils are now finding considerable challenges in funding their climate action plans because of financial pressures.

Accordingly,

Waverley Borough Council

- **writes to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Local Government requesting a meeting to agree funding to facilitate Waverley Borough Council's trajectory to carbon neutrality by 2030;**
- **calls on the government to legislate immediately to provide 100% grant funding for all councils with robust and costed action plans for reductions in carbon emissions to net zero;**
- **calls on the government to engage with the Local Government Association to develop detailed criteria for the additional government grant funding for councils with a robust and costed trajectory to net zero carbon emissions;**

- **calls on other councils with climate emergency action plans to affirm their support for government funding for robust and costed action plans for carbon emission reductions.**

Proposer: Councillor Steve Williams

Seconder: Councillor Paul Follows