

11 January 2021	ITEM: 5
Local Development Plan Task Force	
Thurrock Climate Change Strategy	
Wards and communities affected: Borough-wide	Key Decision: No

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the work the Council is doing in relation to the Climate Change agenda and how that work will feed into the new Local Plan for Thurrock.

Introduction

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) sets out that the planning system has three overarching objectives in achieving sustainable development. The third of these, the environmental objective, includes *“to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low-carbon economy”*.

The NPPF goes further to provide a dedicated section to meeting the challenges of climate change, including flooding and coastal change, stating that the planning system should *“shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions to greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and increase resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and supported infrastructure.”*

To achieve this, the NPPF sets out a number of planning policy objectives on, for example, resilience and vulnerability of new development, the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, and management of flood risk, as well as how local planning authorities can support local initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy generation.

In line with the objectives of NPPF, in October 2019 Thurrock Council carried a motion resolving to declare a Climate Emergency that requires urgent action, request that the council’s activities become carbon net zero by 2030 and request that the council embed this work in all of its areas and take responsibility for reducing, as rapidly as possible, carbon emissions from council activities.

The Council also requested that a Citizens Assembly on Climate Change be established as well as a Climate Change Partnership Group involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, climate science and solutions experts, businesses and other relevant parties.

The Local Plan and Council ambition on Climate Change

Recognising that Climate Change will be one of the major considerations for the Council and its Local Plan in the years ahead, the planning team worked together with lead officers charged with establishing the Climate Change Partnership Group to commission a Climate Change Strategy Scoping Report, produced by Arup.

This report sets out:

- A baseline assessment of the current Thurrock climate impact (emissions) and risks (hazards);
- A review of existing legislation and policy requirements applicable to Thurrock, with how best to respond to these;
- How best to integrate climate change objectives from the current corporate documents, local plan processes, policy and operations;
- An outline of the initiatives to focus on in the Local Plan, recognising Thurrock as a growth area against its obligation to manage climate change and reduce emissions; and
- The requirements for a full Climate Change Strategy for the borough alongside a stakeholder list for who should be involved.

This report can be found at Appendix 1.

Current position and next steps

The Climate Change Partnership Group has now been formally established and in November 2020 held its first official meeting, with further meetings scheduled throughout 2021. Throughout the first half of 2021 the strategic planning team will also be holding a series of Design Charrette workshops throughout the borough, liaising with land owners, developers and the public to hear their views on the nature, scale and form of new development they would like to see come forward in the emerging Local Plan.

With these two work streams running in parallel, this is the opportune time to progress the Thurrock Climate Change Strategy, fulfilling the requirements set out in the initial scoping report. The strategy will be prepared by Arup working together with the strategic planning team alongside key officers on the Climate Change Partnership Group. The strategy will help guide the development of planning policy in the emerging Local Plan that will be necessary to meet the national and local objectives on mitigating climate change, reducing emissions and securing low/renewable energy, as well as help guide and inform the nature of development that will be both acceptable to and deliverable for the communities in Thurrock.

Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1: Thurrock Climate Change Scoping Study Report
- Appendix 2: Thurrock Scoping Study – planning Recommendations