

## Advance questions and answers on reports on the O&S agenda 24 May 2022

### 6. Climate Change Action Programme Update

Questions asked by the Green Group with [answers supplied by Dave Barber – Director for Climate Change](#)

Many thanks for the upgrade report. We very much welcome the direction that the CCAP is taking us and the success already achieved.

- Most actions describe an approach (assessments, plans, explorations or developing working relationships) rather than a clear delivery of a measure. Is the programme becoming too ambitious for the available resources? Is it time to reflect and prioritise specific action points that have a clear funding stream, are highly feasible within a given timescale, or too important to ignore given WDC's service areas?  
[Appendix 5 sets out a priorities for 22/23. We are keen to remain ambitious and to bring the wider organisational resources to bear on the climate change agenda. Whilst a number of the priorities in Appendix 5 are challenging and carry significant uncertainties, they are considered to be the most effective areas to focus on to deliver progress towards the Climate Change ambitions. They dovetail with the data provided through the organisational carbon baselines and the Anthesis report. In terms of resources, two additional posts are being recruited to for the climate change team which will increase capacity to deliver these priorities. In addition, we will continue to ensure funding/capacity from other services and external funding is utilised.](#)
- Several actions (appendix 1 Ambition 2) refer to "making funding bids". Are there are more proactive ways of raising funds such as through green community bonds? Or by borrowing? £102 million has been borrowed by WDC for General Fund schemes. Given the energy and cost of living crisis why not borrow big money cheaply for retrofitting social and low-income homes?  
[Borrowing and Community Bonds remain important strands of the climate change funding strategy \(as agreed by Cabinet in November 2021. However, given the financial challenges the Council faces we will need to focus these sources of money on projects which bring a financial return over time. In this context, retrofitting social housing is important for the householders, but is unlikely to bring a return directly to the Council. In contrast the potential for borrowing to support hydrogen and/or solar generation will be given careful consideration once the we have all the data required around costs and income. Funding for providing improved advice to householder on carbon and cost reduction from energy is included within the current proposals for spending within the 2022/23 Climate Action Fund budget and given the cost of living challenges faced by many of our residents, we will be exploring ways to maximise this.](#)
- The report states that "issues relating to power supply, planning and appointing contractors have prevented the delivery of schemes under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund". How will inadequacies in power supply be resolved for decarbonising council assets? Is the electrification of other proposed developments in WD (e.g. through heat pumps) hindered by power supply problems?

Power supply may be a problem for some schemes in some locations – this will be explored on a case by case basis. A key learning point from the work done to date is to ensure that capacity issues are given close consideration at an early stage in the asset decarbonisation works and that solutions are explored with Western Power as part of the costings.

- Re Ambition 3, The Environment Agency and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust are now delivering natural flood management measures in the Finham Brook catchment west of Kenilworth (overflow ponds, debris dams). Do you know where else in WD such schemes are planned or in operation?

Natural flood management will be a key part of our adaptation plans. At this stage we have only recently started to engage with the Environment Agency on this, but expect to pick up pace once the Adaptation Officer is on board. I am not aware of other similar schemes in the District, but will ask the question of the Environment Agency and come back to you once I have heard from them

#### Questions asked by the Labour Group with [answers supplied by Dave Barber – Director for Climate Change](#)

1.  
3.3  
Can you tell us a bit more about the tensions emerging with the Council and Conservation Policies?

The tensions relate to the impact of carbon reduction measures on sensitive heritage assets. Examples include the impact rooftop solar, heat-pump infrastructure, timber-frame window replacements or external wall insulation in conservation areas and or on listed buildings. The planning and conservation teams do try to accommodate these kinds of proposals where current policy and guidance allows. However there is a need to consider updates to current local guidance relating to heritage assets to explore the potential for greater flexibility without undermining to rich heritage of the District. At present no resources have been allocated to carry out this work, partly because there are greater benefits to be achieved from retrofitting more common housing types where such interventions are likely to have less impact. Hence 3.1, 3.2, 3.4 and 3.5 are being prioritised at present.

2. How do you see 'Joint work with SDC' progressing? SDC Climate Change strategy was far behind WDC as reported previously? How do we ensure the sharing of resource is fair and not initially focussed on helping them to catch up?  
It is proposed that joint working with SDC is progressed through a Service Level Agreement whereby effectively WDC “sells” climate change services to SDC. The SLA has not yet been prepared but discussions with SDC officers are underway. This has the advantage of ensuring we continue to achieve value for money and enhanced grant funding opportunities (for example, trees, climate change engagement, joint E charging strategy/procurement) through joint projects whilst enabling each Council to progress separately where there are different priorities. This approach will therefore enable us to ensure WDC’s progress on climate change priorities cannot be slowed down in event that SDC have different priorities. It also ensures that the financial commitments WDC have made will be utilised to deliver WDC’s climate change priorities. Alongside the SLA, it is proposed that a Joint Members Steering Group is established made up of members from SDC’s Climate Change Panel and WDC’s CEPAB. This will oversee the work to deliver the existing ambitions jointly and will provide a forum to identify and (if necessary) resolve differences. Finally,

recruitment is currently underway to employ two new officers (as agreed in the Cabinet report in November 2021). The SLA arrangement will enable the costs of these posts to be shared.