



ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Scrutiny review of Climate Change issues

Report by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Working Group

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of a scrutiny review of climate change issues in Adur and Worthing which has looked at how Adur and Worthing Councils (the Councils) are implementing the aims of the Adur & Worthing Sustainability Framework including the Adur & Worthing Carbon Reduction Plan which is seeking carbon neutrality for the Councils by 2030 and also the plans to develop and inform future policy in a climate change strategy.
- 1.2 The scrutiny review has been undertaken by a Working Group of the Adur & Worthing Councils Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC).
- 1.3 The aim of the review has been to scrutinise climate change issues to help the Councils protect and improve the environment in Adur & Worthing and also help combat some of the biggest environmental issues of time including climate change, biodiversity loss, energy efficient developments, clean energy production and storage and the impact of transport on poor air quality, water efficiency, water quality and waste reduction.
- 1.4 The review has coincided with the Councils agreeing a Carbon Reduction Plan which aims for the Councils to be carbon neutral by 2030, plans by the Councils to deliver the aims of the Sustainability Framework including holding a Climate Assembly and the Zero 2030 Conference held in March 2020, therefore, the Working Group hopes that the review findings can feed into the processes for these issues and help the Councils deliver the aims of the Framework and Carbon Neutrality whilst also publishing a public benchmark and demonstrating progress against it.

2.0 Climate Change - Scope and Terms of Reference for the review

- 2.1 Climate change has been described as a change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels. Since this definition has emerged

Local Councils across the United Kingdom have moved to declare a Climate Emergency in their areas. On 9 July 2019 Adur & Worthing Councils declared a Climate Emergency which means that the Councils recognise that predicted global warming threatens future communities, populations, biodiversity and economies and that measures currently being taken are not enough to stop global warming and limit the changes predicted to be brought by it. The Councils have also committed to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

- 2.2 The Working Group has also recognised and agreed the urgent need that the climate emergency should be addressed and climate action taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts, including: climate-related hazards integrating climate change measures into local and national policies, strategies and planning; and improving education.
- 2.3 In order to try and address the issues connected with climate change, the Scrutiny Working Group agreed the following terms of reference and scope for the review:-
- (i) To receive a briefing on climate change issues to enable Members to be better informed to fully scrutinise the issues;
 - (ii) To scrutinise the Adur & Worthing Carbon Neutral Plan and review how the Councils are implementing the Carbon Neutral Plan aims by 2030. This should be done also using available best practice and information available from other Councils on this issue;
 - (iii) To scrutinise the processes and outcomes of the proposed Adur & Worthing Climate Change Strategy;
 - (iv) To liaise with representatives from the West Sussex Climate Change Task and Finish Group on the outcomes and objectives from that Group to help enhance the scrutiny of Climate Change issues in Adur and Worthing;
 - (v) To lobby Government as appropriate to provide the powers and the resources to make the 2030 target, as set out in the Carbon Neutral Plan, possible; and
 - (vi) To consider if there is a need for any recommendations to be put to the Joint Strategic Committee/relevant Executive Members to help with the implementation of the Adur & Worthing Carbon Neutral Plan and the Adur & Worthing Climate Change Strategy.

3.0 Membership of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Climate Change Working Group

- 3.1 A Joint Overview and Scrutiny Working Group was set up by JOSC to undertake the review and the membership of the Working Group was as follows:-

Councillor Catherine Arnold - Adur District Council (Chairman)
Councillor Bob Smytherman - Worthing Borough Council (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Carol Albury - Adur District Council
Councillor Carl Walker - Worthing Borough Council

Co-opted Members were appointed to support the Working Group:
Chrissie Gunter - Adur Green Party
Jo Paul - Worthing Green Party

4.0 Method of the review

- 4.1 The JOSC requested that the Working Group undertake the review as part of the 2019/20 JOSC Work Programme. From the start of the review, the Working Group wanted to ensure that it was briefed on the background to Climate Change in Adur & Worthing to make sure that it fully understood what the Councils were striving to achieve in relation to climate change and the work that was being undertaken working with the communities and local business partners to achieve the aims of the Sustainable Adur & Worthing Framework and subsequent work to help the Councils work towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

- 4.2 The Working Group has held detailed evidence gathering meetings with the following witnesses:-

Rod Thick, Worthing Fair Trade;
Amber Benbow, Greenpeace;
Barbara O'Kelly, Adur Residents Environmental Action Group (AREA);
Heather Godfrey, Independent voice and member of Extinction Rebellion;
Clive Andrews, Shoreham-By-Cycle;
Francesca Iliffe, Strategic Sustainability Manager, Adur & Worthing Councils;
Moira Hayes and Ian Moody, Planning Policy Managers for Adur and

Worthing

respectively;

Councillor Kevin Boram, Senior Advisor to the Cabinet Member for the Environment, West Sussex County Council; and
Darryl Hemmings, Transport, Planning and Policy Manager, West Sussex County Council

Written evidence was also supplied by Lloyd Harris, Safety and Resilience Manager, Adur & Worthing Councils

5.0 Findings and Proposals

5.1 The Working Group has received good evidence from the witnesses on climate change in general, on how the Councils can look to work with the communities to achieve the aims of the carbon neutral plan and the Adur & Worthing Sustainable framework.

5.2 Evidence gathered from the witnesses and the Adur and Worthing Councils approach to delivering climate change

5.3 In December 2019, March, April and May 2020, to begin the evidence gathering part of the review, the Working Group received evidence from the witnesses referred to above in Paragraph 4.2 of this report. This included hearing from Francesca Iliffe, Adur & Worthing Councils Strategic Sustainability Manager, on progress in delivering the climate change initiatives. This briefing also included an appraisal of the 'Zero 2030' Community led conference held on 4 March. The Working Group was advised that the Councils had produced a Carbon Neutral Plan in December 2019

[Working towards the 2030 target - Adur & Worthing Councils' Carbon Neutral Plan](#)

The Councils had also approved a refreshed Sustainability Framework in December 2019 [SustainableAW Refresh - increasing ambition and deepening engagement](#) The Sustainability Framework is set out here

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/Media.152062.smxx.pdf>

Key issues raised by the witnesses were as follows:-

- That Fair Trade should be promoted on the Council website.
- There was not enough in the Adur and Worthing Sustainability Framework to explain how the relevant information will be disseminated to the wider audience. The view was that there needed to be some form of more detailed education plan provided for this.
- The Council's vehicles need to be improved for emission control.
- A good anti idling campaign was needed to be provided around schools and at level crossings.
- Bus routes needed to be with electric vehicles and with routes that encourage people to stop using cars and the Councils should ensure that more greenspace is provided in new developments.
- There should be more tree planting and shops to be required to pick up litter outside of their premises.
- Children's playgrounds to be provided near all new developments.
- The communities should be fully involved in the delivery of the Carbon Neutral Plan and the Sustainability Framework. There was a need to ensure that there is more community consultation, engagement and promotion about sustainability and that there is more accessible information about sustainability.

- That when letting contracts, the Councils should consider choosing companies that demonstrated through their supply chain that they have a good carbon reduction record.
- That the Councils make more use of the green areas for rewilding and exploit any opportunity for nature to be re-established whenever a site is cleared.
- That the District, Borough and County Councils needed to work better together in tackling climate change and there was a need for smaller, more immediate spending on selected small inexpensive improvements that will bring immediate benefit.
- Local Plans, Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP), Sustainable Planning documents (SPD's) and air quality mitigation statements need to be good quality and continue to address sustainability issues. They need to contain 'requirement' type language where possible to support radical carbon reduction.
- Planning enforcement teams to ensure that planning conditions relating to sustainability are tightly enforced. Evidence provided indicated that they are not. Use Section 106 funding to appoint extra enforcement staff?
- County Council to be encouraged to implement projects quickly to speed up sustainability. The view was that the County Council are sometimes too slow in delivering Highway projects for example.
- That the revised West Sussex Transport Plan and any applications for infrastructure funding should include a weighting in favour of carbon reduction objectives. At present the Plan has no such weighting in place.

5.4 As part of the evidence gathering for the review, the Working Group was also informed about the work and consultations undertaken by the West Sussex County Council to develop a Climate Change Strategy for 2020 - 2030 (Subsequently agreed in July 2020). The County Council had set up a Climate Change Advisory Group to advise on the preparation of a climate change strategy to deliver action for climate change and evidence was provided by Councillor Kevin Boram of West Sussex County Council who was Chairman of the Group and Senior Advisor to the Cabinet Member for the Environment. The Working Group notes this work but has made comments on the Strategy itself and the consultation undertaken, as part of the recommendations later on in this report.

5.5 The Working Group was also provided with information on the content of the West Sussex Transport Plan and the proposed consultation on the review of the Plan which was planned for 2021/2022.

5.6 Future work on Climate Change

5.7 Climate change measures being undertaken by the Councils to work towards carbon neutrality by 2030 have been moving at pace since the review began and the Working Group have been kept up to date on the progress with this work. The Working Group has welcomed this work covering the following issues:-

- Plans to create a Climate Assembly from Autumn 2020 as an approach to improve public engagement in climate change and help inform future policy and action locally including the development of a Climate Change Strategy based on the outcomes - Invitations are being sent to local residents inviting them to apply to take part in the Assembly <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/news/pr20-087.html> ;
- Production of an online SustainableAW magazine (first edition July 2020) to help showcase and inform the communities about local sustainable activity and how they can get involved and also help them understand the scale and urgency of the issues. <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/sustainable-aw-magazine/>

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

- 6.1 The Working Group would like to thank Officers and the witnesses for their support and invaluable contributions into this review. The Working Group is pleased that there is work being undertaken by the Councils to address climate change, however, some strong recommendations have been identified to help the Councils and other partners tackle climate change which the Working Group would like to put to the Joint Strategic Committee for review to help the Councils keep on course to meet the aims of Sustainable Adur & Worthing and to help the Councils tackle some of the biggest environmental issues of our time.
- 6.2 A large part of this review and the evidence gathered has taken place during the ‘lockdown’ of the Covid-19 pandemic and some of the findings look at ways to change how the Councils and other partners operate and can become more climate resilient and learn from the pandemic to adapt to change and adopt new behaviours. The recommendations focus on the need for the Councils to review what else is being done to tackle climate change across West Sussex, the need to ensure that the communities in Adur and Worthing are fully briefed on the aims of Sustainable Adur & Worthing, that the Councils drive towards sustainable development and further ways for large scale carbon emissions reduction.
- 6.3 The Working Group recognises that there will need to be continued scrutiny and is recommending that it continues to meet to undertake this Scrutiny and oversight. The Working Group makes no apologies for the number of recommendations which it considers are needed and will help complement the detailed approach to climate change and the many factors and variables already included in the Adur & Worthing Sustainability framework that identify carbon reduction.

7.0 Recommendations

Adur & Worthing Councils

7.1 That Adur and Worthing Councils monitor the work being undertaken to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and ensure that:-

- **The aims of the Adur & Worthing Sustainability framework and the delivery of the Carbon Neutral Plan with a baseline carbon reduction figure are more accessible and communicated via the Councils website in a proactive manner allowing more engagement with the communities about promotion of sustainability.**
- **A carbon reduction baseline figure is published on the Councils website;**
- **Public update reports are provided on this work at regular intervals.**
- **The Fair Trade Directory is published on the Councils website.**

Reason - To ensure that the Councils and the communities are kept informed of the progress. The Communities need to be closely involved in the delivery of the Carbon Neutral Plan and the Sustainability framework and to be informed of its progress to ensure better community engagement. These extra requirements will ensure community involvement, transparency and demonstrate clear progress towards achieving carbon reductions.

7.2 That Adur & Worthing Councils and West Sussex County Council be urged to review work on Climate change being undertaken by other Local Authorities that are more advanced in their work and to assess how they have created firm action plans to deal with the issues;

Reason - To assess and learn how other Local Authorities across the United Kingdom are approaching the review of Climate Change with a view to learning from and adopting best practice.

7.3 That Adur District Council ensures that energy efficiency retrofitting of Adur Homes properties is undertaken and that there is a realistic and ambitious timeframe set for this;

Reason - To help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase the energy efficiency and sustainability of the buildings and help reduce overall energy bills for tenants and leaseholders.

7.4 That the Councils should consider only letting contracts to companies that have a good carbon reduction record identified in their supply chain. The Councils should adopt a local green procurement Strategy and produce a sustainability code of practice for companies. The Councils should also encourage this good practice to be extended to all other businesses operating in Adur and Worthing.

Reason - To help with overall carbon reduction and encouraging good business practice by other local businesses and supporting these local businesses who operate these practices.

- 7.5 That the Councils ensure that the Adur and Worthing Local Plans are of a good quality and continue to address sustainability. The Local Plans also should contain 'requirement' type language rather than 'encouragement' type language where possible and also should require biodiversity gain and carbon reduction. There should also be a Planning sustainability checklist. Relevant Officers are advised to ensure that recommendations for Planning applications to be considered by the Adur & Worthing Planning Committees should have regard to the requirements of the Adur & Worthing Local Plans, the Joint Area Action Plan and the AW Sustainability framework. Officers should also be requested to change the current Validation requirements to require applicants to submit a carbon reduction statement for developments of 11 dwellings or more (with appropriate targets).**

Reason - To help improve the sustainability standards of development to improve quality of life in the areas, help reduce carbon and complement the aims of the Councils in striving towards climate change. To engage with the developers at an early stage regarding the principles of energy efficiency.

- 7.6 That JOSC agree to keep the JOSC Climate Change Working Group constituted to monitor the progress with the actions recommended and report back to JOSC at regular intervals to ensure regular oversight and scrutiny is also taking place.**

Reason - To ensure that progress in delivering the climate change actions is being monitored and scrutinised.

- 7.7 That the Councils allocate additional funding to be used for relevant campaigns to help promote alternatives to car use, to help reduce vehicle emissions and help assist in the overall aim for better air quality.**

Reason - To help promote alternatives to car use and improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

West Sussex County Council

- 7.8 That West Sussex County Council be requested to ensure that the proposed review of the West Sussex Transport Plan should encourage modal shift and be transformative.**

This modal shift should involve the introduction of a series of innovative measures to allow for:-

- **Long term cycle infrastructure, including segregated cycle lanes and electric charging points;**
- **Sustainable Transport hubs - Where active travel, public and sustainable modes of transport can interchange; and**
- **Electric vehicle fleet, infrastructure and charging points**

Reason - To help reduce vehicles and road traffic congestion and move away from car based travel through major investment in public transport, walking and cycling, radically reduce all emissions by 45%, to help make roads more environmentally friendly, improved air quality to help improve cycling safety and to ensure safer public health and fitness for Adur and Worthing residents engendering safe and improved cycling and walking infrastructure.

7.9 That the work of West Sussex County Council in agreeing a West Sussex Climate Strategy be noted but that the Working Group considers that the West Sussex Climate Change Strategy 2020 - 2030 is very abstract and there is a lack of urgency and tangible targets which means that there are some gaps between the Strategy and the goals. It is considered that West Sussex County Council should review how it consults with experts when drafting Strategy documents of this kind in the future.

Reason - To make West Sussex County Council aware of its concerns about the Strategy and the lack of consultation which was explained to the Working Group by some of the consultees.

Other partners

7.10 That in 12 months or so, all West Sussex District and Borough Councils be asked to consider setting up a Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to review how all the Councils are dealing with Climate Change issues. This Working Group should also focus on the proposed review of the West Sussex Transport Plan and consider recommending changes to the way the Transport infrastructure investment bids are considered to ensure that the bids consider environmental objectives on an equal footing to economic objectives, which does not currently happen.

Reason - This will enable all of those Councils to review the current position on climate change strategy and action across West Sussex and to assess if anything further needs to be done to combat climate change at a County level. It would also help in overall collaboration on this issue and help ensure that consideration is given in the review of the Transport Plan to applying environmental climate change objectives when considering new transport infrastructure schemes.

**Local Government Act 1972
Background Papers:**

None

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