

# Report for Nantwich Town Council Policy Committee

Item 5

Date of Meeting: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021

## Climate Change

### 1. Purpose of Report

To consider how Nantwich Town Council can contribute to tackling the Climate Emergency.

### 2. Background

2.1 Corporate Strategic Plan – Within the approved plan the Town Council has already committed to several actions which will contribute towards tackling Climate Change including:

- To play an active role in influencing plans for major development/new transport infrastructure and reducing the town's carbon footprint. Respond to next boundary review by Cheshire East in Favour of Town;
- Work with partners to consider possibilities for additional trees and future woodland areas in the town;
- Develop a Plastic Reduction policy;
- Investigate the opportunity for renewable energies;
- Investigate the opportunities for electric vehicle charging points;
- Seek opportunities to work collaboratively with Nantwich Partnership to utilise the green spaces and river frontage within the town;
- increase reusing and recycling within our own operations by using recycled paper and minimise paper use as a matter of course, providing members with the option to receive agendas and other documents by email;
- Consider the environmental impact of all Council decisions;

2.3 In March 2021 during the meeting of the Policy Committee when members considered the adoption of a Plastic Reduction policy, it led on to a discussion with a further commitment to consider a Climate Emergency for the Town Council.

2.4 Cheshire East Council - In May 2019, CEC committed to becoming carbon neutral in its operations by 2025, and to assist with reducing the borough's carbon footprint. Then in May 2020 CEC approved its first carbon neutral action plan.

2.5 Other Town & Parish Council – Both locally and nationally town and parish councils are recognising the importance of the sector in contributing to the Climate emergency. Some good examples can be found at:

- Congleton Town Council
- Lymm Parish Council
- Bollington Town Council
- Audlem Parish Council

- Wilmslow Town Council
- Knutsford Town Council
- Macclesfield Town Council

### **3. Considerations**

#### **3.1 What is Climate Change**

Climate change refers to the long-term shift in the earth's weather patterns and average temperatures. For the past 250 years, humans have contributed to the increased release of carbon dioxide, alongside other greenhouse gases, which causes an increase in global temperatures.

Burning fossil fuels, such as coal, produces energy while releasing greenhouse gases. The long-term challenge is how we address this build-up of greenhouse gases and ensure a clean future for future generations. For example, according to the MET Office, the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere rose by 40% during the 20th and 21st century and is now over 400ppm (parts per million). This level of carbon dioxide is higher than at any time in the past 800,000 years.

#### **3.2 Why should we act?**

There are 186 town and parish councils in Cheshire East and whilst actions on their own may seem small, it is the reach and collective action of town's & parishes that make the sector an important contributor. When you aggregate the impact of 186 communities, it can contribute a significant change.

#### **3.3 What is our role?**

Councils have an important leadership role in creating low carbon and climate-resilient communities. Individual councillors also have an important leadership role.

- demonstrating leadership within the council, developing a vision and mainstreaming ownership and responsibility
- communication and engagement, listening and engaging with the community
- establishing partnerships for action
- making things happen, eg supporting local energy projects actively championing flood defence measures
- representing: advocating for change at national, regional and local levels, looking after the interests of the vulnerable
- empowering communities: providing support, funding, information and capacity
- transparency and accountability about goals, actions and progress against targets.

#### **3.4 What can we do?**

Cheshire East Council has developed a Town and Parish Council tool kit to support Town and Parish Councils across Cheshire East to consider their role in achieving targets, delivering change and accelerating their own carbon neutral transition. There are also many good practice examples available including a document on case studies published by NALC (National Association of Local Councils).

A good starting point is to form a working party to develop proposals which could include:

- identifying and working with stakeholders of the town;
- Host/facilitate community workshops;
- Determine the Town Council's ambitions to become carbon neutral, and how the Town Council can help and enable the community to reduce the town's carbon footprint
- Developing a cohesive action plan
- Consultation on action plan

### 3.5 Will there be a financial cost?

Whilst some projects to address climate change will have a financial cost, there will be many activities/actions that can be carried out with little or no cost. One of the biggest actions to combat climate change is to talk about it, share knowledge and education, lobbying, campaigning and leading by example.

There are small effective actions that could create cost savings or cost very little including, measuring the carbon footprint, changing to LED lighting, transferring to green energy, installing smart meters etc.

There will also be large scale projects which whilst expensive will create a long-term return on investment such as solar panel installations.

## 4. Recommendations

**4.1** That member consider the position of the Town Council in declaring a Climate Emergency and agree membership of a working party.

## 5. Financial Implications

There would be no direct financial implications in developing an ambition to become carbon neutral. However, there would be financial implications for some projects identified which would need to be costed.

## 6. Equalities Impact

There would be no direct equality impact as a result of this report

## 7. Personnel Implications

There would be no personnel implications.

## **8. Environmental implications**

There would be no direct environmental implications however, any actions identified and agreed would have a positive impact on the environment.

## **9. Consultation**

The best way to seek community buy in is to involve them through consultation and workshops.

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