

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 11 June 2019

REPORT TO PLACE SCRUTINY (SPECIAL)

Date Meeting: 18 June 2019

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date Meeting: 23 July 2019

Report of: Programme Director - Exeter City Futures and the Deputy Leader / Portfolio Holder for Climate and Culture.

Title: Towards Carbon Neutral Exeter

Is this a Key Decision?

No

* One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 On 15th March 2019 Exeter City Council, declared a commitment to make Exeter a Carbon-Neutral City by 2030. This ambition is aligned to the vision for the City and has potential to make a vital contribution to our planet and all its people.
- 1.2 Exeter has been playing a role in rising to the critical climate change challenge for some time and the City already has a world-class reputation in climate and environmental research. Over the past decade the City Council have pioneered Passivhaus standards in the UK, deployed renewable generation across their public sites and delivered large-scale district heating networks.
- 1.3 In 2016, Exeter City Council and Global City Futures established Exeter City Futures Community Interest Company (ECF CIC), as an organisation to support the creation of a vibrant and sustainable Exeter. Joined in 2018 by Devon County Council, Exeter College, the University of Exeter, Global City Futures and the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust, ECF CIC provides the supporting environment and governance that can deliver a carbon neutral City.
- 1.4 Exeter has the opportunity to show leadership among cities through decisive implementation of policies, innovations and investment that shape the way we live and our environmental impact for decades to come. This report (and attached paper) makes recommendations as to the next steps that Exeter City Council should take in order to deliver the commitment to become carbon neutral.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That Executive recommends, that Council declare a 'Climate Emergency'.

- 2.2 That the Executive are minded to recommend the following to the Council on 23 July, subject to detailed consideration by a special meeting of Place Scrutiny, scheduled for 18 June 2019, with the results of that consideration being reported back to Executive on 9 July 2019.
- 2.3 That the carbon neutral target for Exeter is framed in a way that links to wider regional targets. This shows Exeter's intention to decrease its emissions without increasing emissions in the wider region.
- 2.4 That Exeter City Council commit to their operations becoming carbon neutral ahead of the 2030 date and mobilise resource to develop internal plans to deliver the target.
- 2.5 That Exeter City Council request a **"Zero Carbon Delivery Team"** is convened by ECF CIC to establish a city plan for delivery that builds on the [Energy Independence Roadmap](#) produced by ECF CIC and uses the 12 Goals as the basis of the approach (see Appendix 1 to this report for a list of the Goals). The Zero Carbon delivery team will:
- Draw together existing evidence and data to establish baseline state of the City presented under each of the 12 Goals
 - Conduct a full audit of the City to highlight gaps between current plans and what is required to achieve zero carbon
 - Define a clear city plan showing outcomes that will need to be met to deliver zero-carbon, how existing activities support and where there are gaps.
 - Identify immediate opportunities and crucial first steps
- 2.6 That Exeter City Council commit resource to be part of the Zero Carbon Delivery Team and, due to the urgency required, co-locate those resources with ECF CIC to ensure that the City Council is leading by example and sharing learning with other ECF CIC Member organisations and the wider ECF CIC Partner Network. (A list of current members of the ECF CIC Partner Network is provided in Appendix 2 to this report)
- 2.7 That Exeter City Futures CIC be requested to convene **"Zero Carbon Mandate Group"** through a series of summits to validate, challenge and endorse the Roadmap produced by the Zero Carbon working group.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1 The Council recognises the scale and urgency of the global challenge from climate change and accepts that Cities, like Exeter, have a duty to act quickly, collectively and concertedly to avoid the worst of the predicted outcomes. Cities around the world are setting their sights on becoming carbon neutral, and many, like Exeter, have made commitments to achieve this target. Very few of these Cities have to date set out clear, deliverable plans to achieve those targets. **The attached paper "Towards a Carbon Neutral Exeter" provides an overview of the approaches Cities around the world are following to become carbon neutral.**
- 3.2 The roadmap to energy independence, published in 2017, outlined the technical feasibility of a zero carbon city and through ECF CIC the City Council is working with Devon County Council, Exeter College, the University of Exeter, Global City Futures and the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust to identify and implement programmes of innovation and investment focussed on outcomes that link closely to the mitigation pathways identified within the SR1.5¹

¹ Full title: 'Global Warming of 1.5°C - An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.'

and also linking to the UN sustainable development goals of health, clean energy, cities and communities, and sustainable consumption and production (SDGs 3, 7, 11, and 12, respectively).

- 3.4 Since its incorporation in 2016, ECF CIC have undertaken extensive engagement activities to establish 12 Goals that reflect the priorities of the residents and business within Exeter. These activities form the basis of the approach to delivery of a zero-carbon City.
- 3.5 It is now critical that Exeter defines a clear delivery roadmap that sets out the scale of the challenge and the likely investment required

4. What are the equality and diversity impacts of this decision?

- 4.1 Age - The road map/action plan could have relevance to the age equality strand due to different patterns of car ownership, different concerns over accessibility of public transport and different abilities to walk and cycle as an alternative mode of transport. Environmental information needs to be accessible and terminology used needs to encourage and not disincentives people to take action. Further, the need to take forward different energy efficiency measures in the home to alleviate fuel poverty. In relation to children and young people. The road map could have a positive impact of increased opportunities for walking and cycling which could have additional benefits of tackling obesity and encouraging healthy living. Further the very young are most at risk from thermal extremes.
- 4.2 Disability - The road map/action plan will have relevance to the disability equality strand due to different patterns of car ownership, different concerns over accessibility of public transport. In addition, the need to take forward different energy efficiency measures in the home to alleviate fuel poverty. The design and condition of the built environment has a significant impact on the quality of life of disabled people. Although, the potential impact of reducing emissions will result in benefits for respiratory illnesses, the hotter weather may exacerbate air quality. Flood risk information will need to be publicised and made available in a range of languages and formats. Emergency plans need to address the requirements of disabled people.
- 4.3 Gender Identity - The road map/action plan could have relevance to the gender identity equality strand due to climate change having different impacts on men and women, with adverse effects disproportionately affecting women. Issues affecting for example different patterns of car ownership, different concerns over accessibility of public transport and different abilities to walk and cycle as an alternative mode of transport. There is a need to ensure energy efficient measures alleviate fuel poverty.

5. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources:

- 5.1 The role of Exeter City Futures Programme Director has already been created within the City Council, in order to oversee the mobilisation and delivery of ECF CIC. The role has been filled via a secondment from Global City Futures.
- 5.2 It is recommended that additional resource, already employed within Exeter City Council are mobilised with the specific objectives to work as part of the Zero Carbon Delivery Team and to define the carbon reduction plan for Exeter City Council as well as inputting to the integrated Delivery Roadmap.
- 5.3 The report entitled "Energy Independence 2025, Roadmap to city-scale Energy Independence" identified finance as a particular barrier. The City Council is unlikely to be in a position to fund on its own a delivery plan for a Carbon Neutral City. The Green Deal that was launched by the Government in 2013 attempted to solve the problem of financing

households to make improvement for solid wall insulation, double glazing etc. was scrapped. Significant private and public finance is likely to be required to make the changes required. This aspect will be explained in preparing the delivery plan to Carbon Neutral Exeter.

6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no additional requests for funding contained within the report. If the services providing the resources requested to support the project require additional funding in the future, then an additional paper to Council will be required.

7. What are the legal aspects?

Please see Monitoring Officer comments below.

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

The report recommends that the Council commits resource towards achieving its carbon neutral goal. However, the type and cost of that resource has not been set out in this report. Assuming the resource is people related, the Council must comply with its HR policies.

9. Report details:

8.1 The attached paper "Towards a Carbon Neutral Exeter" provides a review of Cities that have set out commitments for carbon reduction and analyses the approaches they are using. This paper provides the context and rationale for the recommendations made in this report.

10. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

10.1 Exeter City Council has committed to being a carbon neutral city by 2030. Meeting this target will require decisive implementation of new policies, innovation and investment in areas such as: renewable energy generation associated with battery storage; energy efficiency; electric vehicles, better public transport; active transport; low-energy buildings; reduced food wastage; ecosystem restoration; and more sustainable land-use and urban planning.

10.2 The reduction of congestion within Exeter is a priority objective of the City Council's Corporate Plan. Decreasing carbon-intensive transportation will play an important role in limiting future emissions. Policies that encourage compact, pedestrianised zones, zero emission vehicles and modal shifts toward walking, cycling, public transport, as well as shorter commute distances, will be key to delivering the carbon neutral target. Delivering these policies will also offer additional benefits including reduced air pollution, congestion and road fatalities, and improved health outcomes from more active travel and cleaner air.

10.3 The Corporate Plan proposes that ECC will work towards our ambition of a city where transport is not a barrier to accessing education, jobs, services or social activities, and where sustainable means of travel are cheaper, quicker and more convenient than private car ownership.

11. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

11.1 Strong engagement and partnership approaches are necessary for sustainable change. Both grass-roots (bottom up) and major infrastructure (top-down) change projects will need to be identified. There is the risk that Members of ECF CIC, partners, the business community and residents of Exeter do not support the work of ECF CIC or the 12 Goal approach to delivering a carbon neutral Exeter and therefore the City does not work together towards the

shared outcome. This will be mitigated through: a comprehensive communication plan to engage stakeholders across the City to consider change projects; a clear Delivery Roadmap that shows how all initiatives across the City work towards the target and identifies gaps; as well as the establishment of the Zero Carbon Mandate Group to validate and challenge the Delivery Roadmap.

- 11.2 Exeter City Council recognises that a proportion of carbon emissions in the wider travel to work region are due to journeys into Exeter for employment, education or leisure. There is a risk that Exeter City Council is perceived as not supporting emissions reduction in the wider region. This will be mitigated by ensuring robust linkage to the wider regional targets and by working in partnership with neighbouring authorities and with Devon County Council to develop schemes that help to reduce the carbon emissions of transport into and around the City and in doing so to accelerate the reduction of carbon in the wider region.
- 11.3 Some of the solutions that we will need to deliver may not, at this stage, be known. This may be challenging to communicate. The City should adopt a capability focused model that indicates outcomes rather than solutions. Exeter City Futures CIC offers innovation processes that can be used to identify the challenges and facilitate project partnerships to acquire the capability to deliver the required outcomes.

12. What is the impact of the decision on health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs, economy, safety and the environment?

- 12.1 In delivering the commitment for a carbon neutral Exeter there will be a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the residents of Exeter, community safety, the environment and the economy. Achieving the target will offer benefits including reduced air pollution, congestion and road fatalities, and improved health outcomes from more active travel and cleaner air.

13. What other options are there, and why have they been dismissed?

- 13.1 There is the option to do nothing but in the face of increasing evidence about the climate crisis and growing public support for change Exeter City Council has a duty to act quickly, collectively and concertedly to decarbonise and play its role in addressing the global challenge of climate change.
- 13.2 Exeter has been playing a role in rising to the critical climate change challenge for some time and the City already has a world-class reputation in climate and environmental research. The Met Office and the University of Exeter inform the international response to climate change every day and Exeter's Local Industrial Strategy sets out the ambition to be the global leader for addressing the challenges of climate change and urbanisation.
- 13.3 Exeter has the opportunity to show leadership among cities through decisive implementation of policies, innovations and investment that shape the way we live and our environmental impact for decades to come.

**Deputy Leader / Portfolio Holder for Climate and Culture; and
Programme Director - Exeter City Futures, Dr Liz O'Driscoll**

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

1. Exeter City Futures CIC, Scrutiny Committee – Resources 27/01/2016, Executive 09/02/2016
2. Exeter City Futures Transforming Exeter through Data, Executive 15/09/2015

3. Energy Independence 2025, Roadmap to city-scale Energy Independence, A report for Exeter City Futures, City Science 2017

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