

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 10TH DECEMBER 2019
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CONSTITUENT
AUTHORITIES CONCERNED WITH CLIMATE
CHANGE

Purpose of the Report

1. To allow Members to consider recommendations from the constituent authorities concerned with climate change.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Acknowledge the existence of a climate change emergency;
- [2] Instruct officers to prepare a new Environment and Sustainability Strategy and an associated Climate Change Emergency Plan which reflect the fact that a climate change emergency exists;
- [3] Instruct officers to present a paper to the Estates and Property Committee concerned with environmental standards relating to the design and construction of a fire station before a decision is made about the development of the Crewe Fire Station site; and
- [4] Authorise the Chair with the assistance of the Director of Governance and Commissioning, to prepare and send a suitable response to the leaders of the constituent authorities.

Background

2. All of the constituent authorities have passed motions entitled "Fighting fire in our Borough". The motions are similar, but not identical and are attached to the report concerned with the 10 minute response standard elsewhere on the Agenda. Subsequently, the Chief Fire Officer has received letters containing the recommendations referred to in the motions. The recommendations that are the subject of this report are set out in the table below:

CONSTITUENT AUTHORITY	RECOMMENDATION
Cheshire East Borough Council	That the design and build of future fire stations adopt the aspirations of our towns Climate Change Emergency

	motion and that the Fire Authority considers passing their own Climate Change Emergency motion.
Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council	That the design and build of future fire stations adopt the aspirations of our borough's climate emergency motion and that the Fire Authority considers passing their own Climate Change Emergency motion.
Halton Borough Council	That the Fire Authority considers passing their own Climate Change Emergency motion.
Warrington Borough Council	That the design and build of future fire stations take account of the Climate Change Emergency and that the Fire Authority consider passing its own Climate Change Emergency motion.

3. In order to provide further context a summary containing some of the key decisions of the constituent authorities concerned with climate change emergency can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.
4. This report covers two issues:
Climate change; and
Design and construction of future fire stations.

Information

Climate Change

Introduction

5. Climate change features prominently in the news most days at present and it is becoming hard to keep up with developments. The picture appears to be getting increasingly gloomy with phrased like 'point of no return' featuring quite regularly. Presumably, this has prompted the significant increase in engagement at many levels of government and society.
6. There is good scientific evidence that the climate is changing because of emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from human activity. Polar ice caps and high mountain glaciers have absorbed so much extra heat from global warming that they are at risk of collapsing. Populations living near coasts are bearing the brunt of higher seas and stronger storms. The world's reefs are under threat and marine life is being impacted.
7. The bulk of emissions derive from our demand for energy. The largest contributor is carbon dioxide (CO₂), emitted when fossil fuels are burnt to

meet that demand. There are also other emissions from industrial processes, agriculture etc.

8. To limit the most damaging impacts of climate change, there is a need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

9. The IPCC's Special Report, published in October 2018, stated that we have just twelve years to limit global warming to 1.5°C. The IPCC stated that this could only be achieved with ambitious action from national and local government, the private sector and local communities, and required CO₂ emissions to fall from their 2010 levels by 45% by 2030, reaching net zero by 2045. "net zero" means that any remaining emissions are balanced by the absorption of an equivalent amount from the atmosphere through measures such as tree planting and reforestation.

Climate Change Emergency Declarations

10. Governments, local authorities and other organisations are being encouraged to declare a climate change emergency to reflect the urgency of the situation. By doing so, they are pledging resources and making public commitments to achieve significant carbon reduction targets.

UK Government

11. On the 1st May 2019 the UK Parliament passed a motion declaring an environment and climate emergency following the findings of the IPCC's report.
12. The House recognised the devastating impact that volatile and extreme weather will have on UK food production, water availability, public health and through flooding and wildfire damage and noted that the UK is currently missing almost all of its biodiversity targets, with an alarming trend in species decline.
13. The Government was called upon to
 - increase the ambition of the UK's climate change targets under the Climate Change Act 2008 to achieve net zero emissions before 2050
 - to increase support for and set ambitious short term targets for the roll out of renewable and low carbon energy and transport
 - to move swiftly to capture economic opportunities and green jobs in the low carbon economy while managing risks for workers and communities currently reliant on carbon intensive sectors
 - to lay before the House urgent proposals to restore the UK's natural environment and to deliver a circular zero waste economy.

14. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 came into force on 27th June 2019. This amended the legally binding target to reduce green house gas emissions from 80% to 100%, or net zero by 2050. This legislation made the UK the first G7 country to legislate for net zero emissions.
15. The Environment Bill, introduced in the Queens Speech, is expected to enshrine environmental principles in law and create new legally binding environmental improvement targets. A new independent regulator, the Office for Environmental Protection, will be established to scrutinise environmental policy and law and investigate complaints and take enforcement action.

Local Government

16. UK Government has placed emphasis on local authorities setting a leading example on climate change. Actions by Local Authorities will be critical to the achievement of the Government's climate change objectives. Councils are responding by declaring a "Climate Change Emergency" and committing resources to address this emergency.
17. A section from the Policy Statement published with the Environment Bill headed 'Delivering environmental ambition at the local level' is provided in Appendix Two to this report.

Design and Construction of Fire Stations

Introduction

18. At present the law has been unable to keep pace with the climate change emergency declarations. However, this process is expected to begin after the election.

Regulatory Framework (e.g. planning and building control)

19. Whilst local authorities are preparing for the enactment of the Environment Bill, it remains difficult to predict the impact, other than to accept that new buildings will need to have better environmental performance. However, no matter how robust the regulatory framework is, there also will be a need for the construction industry to understand and deliver buildings that meet the new requirements.

Environmental Standards

20. There are a range of existing environmental standards associated with buildings. They offer different approaches to environmental measures, e.g. some look at a range of issues where others focus on carbon reduction. It is anticipated that fresh versions of these standards will be

issued with enhanced requirements. It is clear that lower ratings will be dropped: buildings will need to perform better.

The Fire Authority's Position

Climate Change

21. Officers were recently asked to submit a document for the Cheshire and Warrington Sub-Regional Leaders Board which explained: the Fire Authority's current policy position on climate change; the potential implications for it; and the actions it was taking to mitigate against climate change. The document is reproduced in the table below as it is thought to be a useful overview.

Organisation/body - Cheshire Fire Authority		
Describe your policy position on climate Change	What are the potential implications for your organisation/sector	What action are you taking to mitigate against Climate Change
<p>Cheshire Fire Authority (CFA) has not declared a Climate Emergency.</p> <p>CFA was a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.</p> <p>CFA has an Environmental Policy.</p> <p>CFA has an Environment and</p>	<p>The impact of climate change increases the likelihood of extreme weather events, such as significant rainfall. As well as affecting coastal areas, rivers and canals, this can lead to surface water flooding impacting upon people and property.</p>	<p>CFA has committed to various short and longer term projects concerned with: carbon and energy reduction in buildings; waste management, behavioural change, fleet management; and water usage.</p> <p>The following is a list of some of the actions taken by CFA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biomass boiler utilising sustainably sourced wood pellets fitted at Fire HQ. ▪ Air source heating systems in new build fire stations ▪ Solar PV at 7 locations ▪ New cleaner/efficient gas boiler systems replacing oil-fired systems ▪ Upgraded legacy boilers to more efficient combi systems ▪ Thermal water heating arrangements at Fire HQ and Northwich Fire Station

Sustainability Strategy 2014– 2020.	<p>Climate change can also contribute towards the other extremity of heatwaves and prolonged dry weather. Such circumstances could lead to fires involving grass, heath and moorland.</p> <p>This can lead to large scale incidents that require significant resources over an extended period of time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction of electric vehicles into the non-operational fleet and charging infrastructure at main sites. ▪ Encouraging use of electrical vehicles and by making charging infrastructure available to staff. ▪ Elements of environmental driving added to training programmes ▪ Testing and introduction of a new environmentally friendly foam product for training and operation needs ▪ Simplification of waste processes to deliver costs savings and improve recycling ▪ Introduction of LED lighting
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22. A key target in the Authority's Environment and Sustainability Strategy is the carbon reduction target of 40% by 2020. In 2018 the reduction was 31% and notwithstanding the building of new fire stations and the safety centre it is possible that the target will still be met next year. However, targets for carbon reduction will need to be revised with a step-change as organisations determine how quickly they intend to move towards net-zero.
23. Officers have been working on reframing the key environmental documents. It is anticipated that a document, or documents will replace the soon-to-end Environment and Sustainability Strategy. Most organisations are considering the publication of a document that might be entitled climate change emergency plan. The Estates and Property Committee will initially consider these prior to their presentation to the Fire Authority. In the meantime the acknowledgment of a climate change emergency would be seen a first step by the Fire Authority.
24. What is particularly difficult to gauge at this point is what the resourcing implications might be. There is likely to be an impact on workload and finances. There will be a need to act in a co-ordinated fashion and almost certainly in collaboration with other public sector organisations.

Design and Construction of Fire Stations

25. Up until now the new fire stations have been designed and built to meet one of the ratings of the Building Research Establishment's environmental standard called BREEAM. It is understood to be the world's leading sustainability assessment method. Lymm (including the safety centre), Penketh and Powey Lane were built to the BREEAM

'good' rating. Chester is being built to the BREEAM 'very good' rating. The planning permission for Chester includes a condition requiring this.

26. Officers have commissioned work from the Authority's external advisers about the relative merits of the various environmental standards that exist. A report is due to be presented to the Estates and Property Committee next year. The external advisers have also been asked to consider climate change in the feasibility work that is ongoing in relation to the Crewe Fire Station site.
27. The approach to the fire station modernisation programme will need to be reviewed in the light of the climate change emergency. The older existing building are the least effective and most difficult to tackle.

Financial Implications

28. Achieving an enhanced environmental standard for new fire stations and enhancing the environmental performance of existing fire stations will involve greater expenditure than has been required in the past. However, there should be some savings on outgoings. It is hard to see how net zero can be achieved without a fairly significant improvement in performance; it will require a range of changes, e.g. electric vehicles are likely to replace petrol/diesel and will require the charging infrastructure to be put in place.

Legal Implications

29. There is no legal requirement to declare/acknowledge the existence of a climate change emergency.
30. The Climate Change (Amendment Order) 2019 has set a legally binding target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.
31. If the Environmental Bill is enacted there will be legally enforceable carbon efficiency targets.

Equality and Diversity Implications

32. There are none.

Environmental Implications

33. This report deals with environmental matters.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE