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| REPORT TO: | | Council | |
| DATE: | | 18 November 2021 | |
| PORTFOLIO: | | Cllr Miles Parkinson, Leader | |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | | David Welsby Chief Executive | |
| TITLE OF REPORT: | | Climate Change Emergency Creation of £1m Reserve | |
| EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A) | No | Not applicable | |
| KEY DECISION: | Yes | If yes, date of publication: | |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report requests Council to approve the redesignation of £1m of reserves held for a variety of purposes to a new reserve to help the Council combat climate change.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. **Council approves the creation of a Climate Change Emergency Reserve of £1m via the transfers of funds from other reserves currently held by the Council, as detailed in the report. (para See 3.21)**
- 2.2. **The Council's Chief Executive is made the Budget Holder for the financial management and authorisation of sums from this Reserve.**

3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

Summary

- 3.1. The Council has previously discussed extensively the threat posed by Climate Change and declared a Climate Change Emergency at its meeting on the 19th September 2019. At that time the Leader of the Council indicated he wished to make a financial commitment of £1m towards action to deal with Climate Change. Due to the impact of COVID 19 it was not possible to implement this change in setting the

2021/22 Budget. However, as the danger from COVID 19 appears to have stabilised and the threat around the need to spend significant additional sums by the Council to help fight it has receded, it is now appropriate for the Council to approve the creation of the new Reserve, which will allow projects and action to be undertaken as required.

Detail

- 3.2.** There is widespread recognition now that the planet has been getting significantly warmer since the Industrial Revolution and that much of that warming has been caused by human industrial development activity and its consequences. It is also recognised that unless the population of the planet does something significant, the trajectory to a significantly warmer planet over the rest of the century will become inescapable, with the impact on human life and other species being profound.
- 3.3.** A 2.0°C degrees rise in average global temperatures would produce widespread and severe impacts on people and nature. Around a third of the world's population would be regularly exposed to severe heat, leading to health problems and more heat-related deaths would occur. Almost all warm water coral reefs would be destroyed, and the Arctic Sea ice would melt entirely, at least once every ten years on average. This would have devastating impacts on the wildlife and communities they support. It is also possible that the irreversible loss of ice sheets in Greenland and the Antarctic could be triggered, leading to a rise of several metres of sea level over the next century.
- 3.4.** By limiting the increase in global warming to 1.5°C rather than hitting 2.0°C, the impacts would be serious, but less severe. The result would be a lower risk of food and water shortages, lower risks to economic growth and fewer species at risk of extinction. The threats to human health from a wide range of conditions such as air pollution, disease, malnutrition, and exposure to extreme heat would also be lower at 1.5°C rather than at 2.0°C. That is why every fraction of a degree of warming matters, and why the commitment to limiting the prospect of temperature rises to 1.5°C has been set.
- 3.5.** The Paris Agreement, adopted at the United Nations COP 21 on 12 December 2015, aims to limit global warming to 1.5°C or stay well below 2°C global temperature target compared to pre-industrial levels. Countries aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a carbon neutral world by 2050, implemented through a 5 year cycle of increasingly ambitious climate action. However, the world is currently not on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C degrees.
- 3.6.** The targets announced in Paris would result in warming well above 3 degrees by 2100 compared to pre-industrial levels. On this path, temperatures will carry on rising, bringing even more catastrophic flooding, forest and bush fires, extreme weather and destruction of species.¹ Extreme sea-level events that previously occurred once in 100 years could happen every year. Further warming of the planet will amplify

¹ COP26-Explained

permafrost thawing, the melting of glaciers and even greater loss of Arctic Sea ice. This will impact on ocean ecosystems and the people that rely on them.²

- 3.7.** For the United Kingdom the estimated impact of the change in global temperatures is forecast to be,
- Winter rainfall is expected to increase by approximately 6% by the 2050s and by 8% by the 2080s, compared to a 1981-2000 baseline.
 - Summer rainfall is expected to decrease by approximately 15% by the 2050s compared to a 1981-2000 baseline.
 - London's sea level is expected to rise by between approximately 23cm by the 2050s and 45cm by the 2080s.
 - River flows will be more extreme. Peak flows are expected to be up to 27% higher in the 2050s, while in the summer months river flows could be 82% lower by as soon as 2050.
 - Public water supplies are expected to require more than 3.4 billion extra litres of water per day if no action is taken before 2050.
- 3.8.** The Council has long been concerned of the dangers of global warming and the threat of climate change and the issue has come up many times in discussions at Council and between Councillors, Council officers and members of the public over the last decade and even before that. The Council effectively started to formally respond to the Climate Change Emergency when Resources Overview & Scrutiny on the 11th September 2018 resolved to create a Panel to look at environmental issues. The Overview & Scrutiny Panel that conducted this review was entitled "Hyndburn Green Review" and finalised its report on the 24th October 2019 under the co-chair of Cllr Jenny Molineux and Cllr Stephen Button. The report was approved by Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 31st October 2019 and was submitted to the next Cabinet meeting on the 13th November 2019. The Cabinet approved the report and the recommendations from the Committee. The Green Review identified a range of actions for the Council to take. It gave a commitment to produce a measured baseline of our organisational carbon footprint and to achieve a net-zero carbon footprint position for Council activities by 2030. It also highlighted the need for the Council to work with others towards making Hyndburn net zero carbon.
- 3.9.** Also, at this time in Autumn 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on the 19th September and committed to undertaking action to respond to the threat posed by Climate Change. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Miles Parkinson in his budget speech a few months later in February 2020, confirmed the seriousness of the position and the Council's commitment to making a significant positive difference. He indicated his intention to set aside £1m of Council funds to ensure a variety of environmental initiatives could be undertaken over the next few years to help lower the Council's carbon footprint and assist in the move towards a net zero position in Hyndburn, as quickly as possible.

² International Panel on Climate Change, August 2021

- 3.10.** Work on progressing our response to the Climate Change Emergency was forced to be delayed due to the COVID 19 pandemic, which hit in March 2020, just after the Budget meeting. Due to the continuing high levels of COVID 19 cases that continued to exist in February 2021 it was not possible to commit resources to the Climate Emergency at that point, while the potential need to spend large sums on fighting COVID 19 seemed likely. However, over 6 months on from setting the Budget for 2021/22, the threat from COVID 19 seems to have stabilised and it is now possible to look to begin to make real the ambitions we have around our response to Climate Change by making available funds to allow the Council to take action.
- 3.11.** Significant actions have already commenced in a number of high priority areas within the Council's own operations to fulfil these commitments. A review of progress to date by the Climate Change Working Group has also begun and is expected to report in December 2021.
- 3.12.** A Carbon Footprint report, prepared by One Carbon World, identified the baseline of CO₂ emissions through independent analysis of Council data for the year 2018/19 at some 2,700 tonnes CO₂ emissions. Emissions from all of the Council's buildings have been analysed and prioritised, with the top 5 buildings emitting more than 100 tonnes CO₂, the next 5 emitting more than 50 tonnes and the next 5 emitting more than 10 tonnes CO₂ per annum.
- 3.13.** The highest priority recommendation stemming from this analysis was for the Council to decarbonise energy, especially from gas usage in the Council's buildings. This was actioned almost immediately and the analysis from this work helped to secure £2.3 million investment from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme together with capital investment from the Council.
- 3.14.** This will allow a total transformation of the energy infrastructure at Hyndburn Leisure Centre. This is projected to reduce emissions by 75% by removing fossil fuel gas heating and replacing it with air source heat pumps, a very large solar array with battery storage, together with upgraded ventilation, pumps, energy monitoring systems and all related electrical infrastructure. Similarly, works underway at Scaitcliffe House will achieve significant emissions reductions at the Council's Headquarters. The Project will also see changes at the Crematorium, with initial measures to achieve energy efficiency improvements and reduce carbon emissions.
- 3.15.** The second highest area of emissions is from fuel usage in the Council's fleet. A range of measures are underway to reduce carbon emissions from the fleet, in tandem with external expertise, these include
- Investigating the potential for EV charging points at 3 sites for Council owned vehicles with an option to allow staff car charging as well.
 - Progressively switching the fleet to electric vehicles, beginning with the small van fleet and potentially making the change to replace 10 petrol/diesel vehicles this year for their electrical equivalent vehicles.
 - Examining the scope to reduce the carbon footprint associated with Tools, Plant and maintenance machinery

- Exploring the viability and options around switching large fleet vehicles away from carbon dependent forms of fuel to electric or other non-greenhouse gas solutions, in tandem with Lancashire-wide waste management arrangements.

- 3.16.** The Council will also be looking to develop and prioritise other areas in which it generates its carbon footprint so that it can tackle these in a systematic and timely fashion and reduce or eliminate them as appropriate.
- 3.17.** To continue on our journey to a net zero carbon footprint a progressive carbon reduction programme, with a pipeline of ongoing projects will need to be developed and we will be looking for further Government decarbonising investment to assist with a rapid implementation of the required changes.
- 3.18.** As well as looking internally at what the Council can do to lower carbon emissions, the Council is committed to taking a lead role within the local community to reduce the carbon footprint within its geographical boundaries.
- 3.19.** The base year for measuring carbon reduction in terms of the national agenda is 1990. At this time, the estimated District wide carbon production was 677,000 tonnes. The Government's current target is to achieve a reduction in the 1990 figure of 677,000 by 68% in 2030 and to achieve a 78% reduction by 2035. This would require Hyndburn's carbon footprint to have fallen to 217,000 tonnes in 2030 and to 149,000 in 2035. Hyndburn area-wide emissions in 2018 were calculated at 381,000 tonnes CO₂. This indicates Hyndburn has achieved a 44% reduction compared to 1990 so far in the 28 years since the baseline was established. It now will need to achieve more than half that total reduction again in just the next 12 years to make the next key target. With the need to reduce the carbon production figure in 2018 of 381,000 by 164,000 tonnes (43%) to achieve the target of 217,000 by 2030.
- 3.20.** Achieving Net zero for the District as a whole by 2050, would require removing the remaining 217,000 tonnes of carbon produced by 2030 over a 20 year period assuming we meet the 2030 target in full. It will require a multi-agency working approach to achieve the further substantial move away from fossil fuels, to achieve a net zero position. This will only be achieved via further dramatic reductions in energy usage and carbon emissions from houses and commercial buildings, vehicles, industrial processes and agriculture, increased deployment of renewable energy, waste reduction and re-use of resources, combined with protection and expansion of all carbon stores, natural solutions for carbon capture and climate change adaptation, more woodland, peatland restoration, soil carbon and enhanced connectivity of ecological networks.
- 3.21.** In light of the above, the Council faces significant challenges in terms of reducing its own Carbon Footprint and in leading the local area to a net zero position. As such it is key that an appropriate level of funding is set aside to ensure that the necessary funds are available to take the appropriate actions when the opportunities arise. The recommendations in this report, ensure that £1m is immediately available to the Council to deploy towards projects and proposals that will achieve significant

reductions in its own carbon footprint and to support activity across Hyndburn to deliver a carbon neutrality by 2030.

- 3.22. The proposal is to release the funding from the Reserves held as outlined in the table below and transfer them to a new Reserve called Climate Emergency Reserve.

| Climate Emergency Reserve Proposed Funding Sources | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Invest to Save | £ 100,000.00 |
| Asset Disposal Reserve | £ 100,000.00 |
| ERDF Clawback Reserve | £ 99,000.00 |
| Area Based Grant Reserve | £ 39,760.06 |
| Performance Reward Grant Reserve | £ 4,307.31 |
| Efficiency Support Grant Reserve | £ 308,179.72 |
| Transitional Grant Reserve | £ 348,752.91 |
| Total | £ 1,000,000.00 |
| | |

- 3.23. As this is a key objective of the whole Council and activities are likely to involve many aspects of the Council's work it is proposed the Budget Holder for these funds is the Chief Executive. He is best placed to co-ordinate activity across the Council and with outside organisations to ensure the funds are effectively used make a real difference in delivering the change we require. The Chief Executive will work closely with the Leader of the Council, , Cabinet Colleagues and, the Council's recently appointed Green Agenda Champion to progress the necessary actions required.

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1. The Council could choose not to create this reserve and attempt to fund any Climate Change Action from existing budgets or via the Capital Programme process each year. Existing Budgets are however limited due to the overall financial pressures the Council faces and the Capital Programme is an annual exercise which will not be sufficiently flexible to allow the Council to act quickly. Providing this Reserve will allow rapid access to funds as required to help in the battle against the Climate Emergency.

5. Consultations

- 5.1. Appropriate consultations on the Council's response to the Climate Change Emergency were undertaken as part of the Green Review.

6. Implications

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| Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council) | As outlined in the report. |
| Legal and human rights implications | Not applicable |
| Assessment of risk | Not applicable |
| Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i> | Not applicable |

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: List of Background Papers

[Hyndburn Green Review Resource Overview & Scrutiny 11th September 2018](#)

[Council 19th September 2019 Declaration of Climate Emergency](#)

[Resources Overview & Scrutiny 31st October 2019](#)

[Cabinet 13th November 2019](#)

[Cabinet 9th December 2020 Appointment of Consultants for Decarbonisation Project](#)

[Council 20th May 2021 Appointment of Green Agenda Champion](#)