

# BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** A GREEN CITY DELIVERY PLAN FOR SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

**DATE:** 6 FEBRUARY 2020

**RECIPIENT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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## **THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER**

### **SUMMARY:**

In June 2019 the council launched its Green City Charter (Appendix 1) as the first step in delivering a programme of change to make Southampton a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable city. Southampton City Council has been joined by over 70 other organisations, businesses and individuals who have expressed their support of the Charter and become signatories.

The Charter acknowledges the need to deliver change to address some of the most pressing environmental issues affecting us today such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and air quality whilst building a model for sustainable economic growth and ensuring the people of Southampton can enjoy a healthy environment. It provides a foundation for signatories to deliver actions and positive outcomes. Southampton City Council is demonstrating how it intends to achieve this with the publication of its Green City Delivery Plan. This identifies over sixty separate actions that cover the full scope of the Charter's commitments and will cover the period up to 2030 and includes a detailed action plan for the next 3 years. A revenue and capital budget has been identified that will ensure existing activities and funds can be bolstered where necessary to deliver the plan. A Communications Plan will assist in ensuring there is transparency in the progress we make and to engage and involve all stakeholders in achieving the Charters' vision.

### **BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:**

1. In March 2019 Southampton City approved the introduction of a Green City Charter ('the Charter'). This was launched in June 2019 and represents the first step in delivering a programme of change to make Southampton a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable city. The Charter identifies priorities and commitments that will facilitate the council and other city partners and stakeholders to deliver actions that will:
  - Reduce pollution and waste;
  - Minimise the impact of climate change;
  - Reduce health inequalities and;
  - Create a more sustainable approach to economic growth.
2. Local businesses, academics and community groups contributed to its development in direct response to the growing awareness in the environmental impacts that human activity is currently causing at both a local and global scale. In Southampton this was

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illustrated by the unprecedented response we received to the Clean Air Zone consultation in 2018. Over 9000 respondents provided an opinion on improving local air quality and this in turn triggered a much bigger conversation about the city and its environment. Nationally this was mirrored, with the emergence of the climate emergency, ocean plastic pollution and biodiversity loss regularly making headlines across our national media.

3. The Charter invites stakeholders to make a statement on their aspirations for supporting environmental improvement and so far over 70 businesses, organisations and individuals have pledged their support and signed up.
4. The Charter provides a foundation for signatories to build upon and deliver actions that will achieve the outcomes needed. Since introducing the charter Southampton City Council has been active in identifying the activities it needs to maintain, strengthen and introduce in order to deliver on its commitments. The Charter covers a broad range of subjects and issues which affect a range of council services and activities.
5. A Green City Working Group comprising of council officers from across its services was established to support the delivery of the Charter and subsequently to develop a response. Internal workshops and meetings were held in order to identify those services and activities in scope, understand the progress the council has made to date and identify our options for achieving more and the practicalities of proceeding with them.
6. Our Green City Delivery Plan ('the Delivery Plan') details the outcome of this exercise and is based around five key themes:
  - Sustainable Energy and Carbon Reduction
  - Delivering Clean Air
  - Our Natural Environment
  - Resources, Waste and Water Management
  - Sustainable Travel

A copy of Delivery Plan is included in Appendix 2.

7. Government published its Environment Strategy in early 2018, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' which proposes to deliver a range of measures to improve the environment within a generation. A set of priorities are identified and it recommends that local efforts be guided by the same goals. The UK Clean Air Strategy was published in January 2019 and advocates a joined up approach in delivering cleaner air, wider environmental and public health improvements and sustainable development. Both form part of a wider vision promoting sustainable development and the Charter and Southampton City Council's subsequent Green City Delivery Plan both attempt to capture this.
8. Southampton City council recognises that a greener city can only be achieved by working in partnership with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders. The council has worked closely with partners to develop a shared set of principles, as set out in the Green City Charter and will continue this work through its subsequent activities. A Communication Plan will support the Delivery Plan to ensure there is

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transparency in the progress we are making and to engage and involve all stakeholders to help build a “Green City culture and network”. As part of our green City Network, we will develop a Youth Assembly, to ensure we engage and consult with young people across the city.

9. Oversight of the Delivery Plan will be coordinated by a Green City Board, comprising of key officers from appropriate service area who will meet routinely. The Board will be responsible for maintaining a Green City Highlights Report that will summarise progress and risks from across the Delivery Plan work programme and ensure there is adequate opportunity for internal scrutiny. “*Success Measures*” are identified in the plan for each theme and the Green City Board will be responsible for ensuring these are being monitored and measured with a range of appropriate key performance indicators. The Board will also ensure that these are reported in a manner that will facilitate wider scrutiny of progress both internally and externally. The Board will also provide a mechanism for collating and ratifying information relevant for Cabinet Member Briefings and senior management through the Executive Management Board.

## RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

### Capital/Revenue

10. Southampton City Council has an existing programme of activities that are delivering significant environmental improvements. Approximately £60M has been committed to a range of schemes that include reducing the carbon footprint of our properties, promoting sustainable travel and developing our cycle ways, reducing the emissions from city buses and taxis and intruding an electric vehicle infrastructure in our car parks. The Green City Delivery Plan proposes a significant uplift to current activities. The budget proposals for 2020/21 include an ongoing revenue budget of £1.4m between 2020/21 and 2024/25 (average £0.3m per annum), and a capital investment of £1m to ensure there is sufficient resource to launch and establish the work programme. A contribution of £20m over 5 years to the SALIX clean growth fund is also built in to the proposals and will support the delivery of our energy efficiency and carbon reduction programme. The budget proposals are subject to formal agreement at Cabinet/Council on 25/26 February 2020.
11. The proposed budget will support five new officer posts from 2020/21 and provide adequate financial resource to enable the delivery of key activities across the work programme that are not supported by existing budgets.
12. It is anticipated that the Plan will help the council’s ability to access other funding streams, including new grant opportunities.
13. All associated procurement activities will be pursued in accordance with the council’s Contract Procedure Rules.

### Property / Other

14. None associated directly with adoption of the Plan. Subsequent actions delivered in response to the Plan will need to assess their implications as part of the due process.

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## **Legal Implications – Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:**

15. s.1 Localism Act 2011 allows the Council to do anything deemed necessary or desirable to deliver or support its functions and duties providing that action is not otherwise prohibited by statute (the general power of competence). The preparation and delivery of a Green City Charter and Delivery Plan is authorised by virtue of s.1.

## **Other Legal Implications:**

16. The contents of a Plan and its subsequent actions may be authorised by a variety of statutory powers and duties, depending on what those actions are. Legal powers to undertake those actions emerging from the Plan will be further investigated as part of the implementation process and be subject to the democratic process as applicable. In undertaking the preparation of the Plan and subsequent actions the Council needs to have regard to the impact of any proposals on protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 and s.17 Crime & Disorder Act (the duty to reduce or remove opportunities for crime and disorder in the area) as well as the duty to secure the rights and freedoms protected under the Human Rights Act 1998. These duties will be addressed by the preparation of an Equalities and Safety Impact Assessment ('EISA'). The Council also has various duties under the Environment Act 1995 and Environmental Protection Act 1990 to address air quality and other environmental pollutants and the proposals under the Charter will assist in delivering this duty.

## **Risk Management Implications:**

17. There are is a potential reputational risk for the council if it is not seen to be taking actions to satisfy the aspirations of the Green City Charter or 'delivering' the stated goals in the Plan and/or that the actions are not effective in terms of delivering the required outcomes or within the expected timescale.
18. There is a risk that failure to deliver a minimum level of improvement in the city environment and, the city's ability to be more sustainable, will disadvantage the local economy and the health and welfare of those who live, work and visit Southampton.
19. The council's ability to deliver its intended outcomes places certain expectations on city stakeholders and government. This includes ongoing and improved provision of central government funding to support the activities covered within the Plan. It is also anticipated that local communities and businesses will cooperate and support us in delivering specific activities. If this support is not forthcoming at the anticipated level delivery of the Plan could be compromised. The support anticipated is considered to be of a "reasonable" level but is exposed to external influences.
20. The delivery of specific lines of activity will require sufficient assessment to ensure there are no unreasonable unintended consequences. This will be managed through SCC existing project management procedures and governance and the decision making process.

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21. The primary aims of the Green City Charter and subsequently the council's Plan cannot be achieved by the council in isolation. Although the council recognises it has a key role to play in achieving a cleaner, greener more sustainable city it must be appreciated that the involvement and contribution from city communities and businesses will be crucial. There will need to be an ongoing focus on engagement with all stakeholders to ensure support and encouragement is effective at maintaining participation.

## **Policy Framework Implications:**

22. The Green City Delivery Plan supports the Clean Air Strategy by providing a mechanism to deliver further improvements in local air quality.
23. The Green City Delivery Plan provides a response to the council's declaration of a climate emergency (confirmed and ratified at Council on the 20th November 2019) and provides the mechanism to satisfy the ambition for its services and activities to achieve a net zero carbon footprint by 2030.
24. The Green City Delivery Plan is consistent with the principles outlined in the Government's Environment Strategy, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' and their Clean Air Strategy.
25. The Green City Delivery Plan is directly aligned to the Social Value and Green City Procurement Policy which is also being considered by Cabinet at its meeting of 11th February 2020.

## **Appendices/Supporting Information:**

1. Green City Charter for Southampton
2. Draft Green City Delivery Plan for Southampton City Council

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