



FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday, 26 January 2022

Subject	Environmental Climate Change Lead Officer
Report by	Councillor Steve Gallant Leader of the Council
Supporting Officer	Nick Khan Strategic Director nick.khan@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01502 523606

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

The Council has embarked on an ambitious programme to deliver its Strategic Plan which consists of five main themes, one of which is 'Caring for our Environment'. In addition, the Council has also declared a climate emergency and pledged to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.

It is clear that we need to build on the good work we have started in order to respond to the environmental challenge and that this challenge is growing and needs a sustained and effective response. Members will have seen the world's leaders coming together recently in Glasgow for COP26 to negotiate commitments to ensure that global warming is kept well below two degrees Celsius and we all have a role to play in making this a reality.

Defining exactly what the challenge is is difficult. It is also difficult to determine exactly what is meant when we refer to 'the Environment' because it is both broad and complex in nature and greater clarity is therefore required if the efforts of the Council are to be focussed and effective. A failure to define what is being tackled, addressed and worked on will undermine the chances of success. We need a greater understanding of what the challenge is and we need objective and triangulated data to provide an evidence based and informed approach in the context of East Suffolk.

The response needs to engage the whole Council and will need to be both strategic and granular, short and long term. It will require a change in working practices, new energy sources, support for our communities and improved reuse/recycle activities.

Currently, delivering against our environmental and climate change commitments is spread across a number of post holders and service areas with no one person or service area responsible for its coordination.

This report proposes that the Council invests in a new senior 'Environmental Climate Change Lead Officer' post to help coordinate and support the delivery of this critical work. This new post will be the Council's central lead for environmental and climate change work and will further develop the Council's policies and strategies in this area. The postholder will further accelerate the pace of our response, support Members and Officers with their ambitions, and work across the whole Council as well as with external partners and stakeholders. This will ensure that strong links are being made between service areas and the numerous streams of environmental and climate change work which, by their very nature, strongly interrelate with each other.

Ultimately, it will be the role of this postholder to coordinate and help drive the delivery of our ambitious environmental and climate change targets and aspirations. In summary they will do this by:

- Helping to shape policy and strategy.
- Coordinating the delivery of the work.
- Measuring progress.
- Communicating all of this.

Options:

There is an option not to invest in a new post but, instead, to attempt to deliver the widespread changes necessary from within existing resources which is unlikely to achieve the scale and speed of change required.

Recommendation:

That the additional funding required for the new post of Environmental Climate Change Lead Officer be approved in order to ensure that the Council delivers against its environmental ambitions.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

If approved by Council, recruitment to the post will be undertaken in early 2022 and given the strategic nature of the post, Members and senior Officers will be involved in the appointment process with the support of HR. Meeting the environmental challenge and coordinating the work around it involves the whole Council and all of the various service areas within it. For this reason, it is proposed that the postholder will report directly to the Council's Strategic Director. The postholder will be supported by the Council's existing Environmental Sustainability Officer and will work closely with the Cabinet Member for the Environment.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

- East Suffolk Strategic Plan
- East Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy

Environmental:

The proposal in this report will drive forward delivery of the objectives contained within the Council's Strategic Plan. It will allow for both a strategic and holistic approach across a diverse area, supporting Members, Officers and a wide range of stakeholders and partners in order to achieve the necessary change.

Equalities and Diversity:

There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment in respect of this report. The recruitment process will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Financial:

This new post represents growth to the budget from 2022/23 which equates to £305,800 (salary with oncosts) over the remainder of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy. This figure is made up as follows:

2022/23 - £71,900

2023/24 - £74,900

2024/25 - £77,800

2025/26 - £81,200

This proposal has been discussed with the Financial Services Team and has been included as part of the 2022/23 Budget and updated Medium Term Financial Strategy that will come before Full Council in February 2022.

Human Resources:

This report refers to the creation of a new post and, subject to Council approving the necessary funding, it is proposed that recruitment will begin immediately. An appropriate Job Description has been drafted evaluated.

ICT:

No ICT implications have been identified.

Legal:

No Legal implications have been identified.

Risk:

There is a risk that the Council will be unable to deliver the scale of change required without this additional resource. A failure to define what is being tackled, addressed and worked on will undermine the chances of success.

External Consultees:	None
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Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected?			
<p>This proposal will strengthen the Council’s ability to effect change through its policies, strategies and initiatives in order to contribute to national, regional and local goals, promoting awareness of emerging environmental issues and the difference East Suffolk Council and its communities can make. This proposal will also provide the key coordination link between all the service areas (as well as with external partners and key stakeholders).</p>			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	<p>Purpose of Report:</p> <p>The Council has embarked on an ambitious programme to deliver its Strategic Plan which consists of five main themes, one of which is ‘Caring for our Environment’. In addition, the Council has also declared a climate emergency and pledged to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.</p>
1.2	<p>Whilst the Council has made good progress in responding to the environmental challenge, the challenge is so broad and complex that greater clarity is required if the efforts of the Council are to be properly focussed and effective. We need a greater understanding of what the challenge is in order to optimise our efforts, based on objective and triangulated data.</p>
1.3	<p>The Council’s environmental objectives are ambitious and cover a number of key areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the digital knowledge and skills of our workforce, partners, residents and businesses. • Improving connectivity for everyone in the district. • Effecting radical changes to our vehicle fleets, council buildings and housing stock. • Encouraging biodiversity and protecting our natural environment. • Minimising waste, reusing materials and increasing recycling. • Encouraging and investing in renewable energy. • Planning Policy. • Coastal Management. • Air Quality. • Climate Emergency (including supporting the county wide Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan).

1.5	This report proposes that the Council invests funds in a new, strategic, post to help co-ordinate, support and deliver these ambitions. This new post will provide the resource to inform the Council, develop policy and strategies, maintain the momentum of our response, support Members and work across the whole Council to ensure that the environmental challenge is being met and agreed actions delivered.
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2 Current position

2.1	The Council's Environmental Services and Port Health team covers a range of services including Environmental Protection, Environmental Health, Food and Safety, Corporate Health and Safety and Port Health services, as well as supporting the Greenprint Forum and the corporate Health and Wellbeing Group. It consistently delivers high quality services but the demand on these services continues to increase, particularly so since the pandemic began.
2.2	Given the scale of the environmental challenge, it has become apparent that additional resource is required (as outlined above) over and above existing Council resources. The responsibility for responding to the environmental challenge does not sit solely with one specific service area. It is far reaching and every service area has a role to play. The response must therefore engage the whole Council.

3 How to address current situation

3.1	The proposal is to create a new post which will drive forward delivery of the environmental ambitions contained within the Council's Strategic Plan. It will allow for both a strategic and holistic approach across all service areas and will provide support to Members, Officers and a wide range of stakeholders and partners to effect the change required.
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4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	The recommendation in this report is considered to strengthen the Council's existing work in relation to the environment and will add capacity.
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Appendices

Appendices:

None.

Background reference papers:

None.