

Report of Head of Democratic Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Date: 14th October 2019

Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry into the reduction of energy consumption in Council buildings – draft terms of reference

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present draft terms of reference relating to the Scrutiny Board’s Inquiry into the reduction of energy consumption in Council buildings.

2. Background information

2.1 Climate Change provides one of the greatest challenges to humanity today, having detrimental impacts on both society and the environment internationally, nationally and locally.

2.2 At Full Council on 27 March 2019, the Council passed a motion declaring a “Climate Emergency”. This is recognised as a significant milestone that requires the Council and the city to act at a faster pace.

2.3 At the beginning of the municipal year, the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board particularly acknowledged the role of the Council in demonstrating leadership in this field. In accordance with its remit, the Board therefore agreed to review how the Council is reducing energy consumption levels within its own corporate buildings in order to minimise both cost and carbon impact.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 To date, the vast majority of carbon reduction realised in the District has been achieved through reductions in the carbon emissions from electricity generation in the national grid. These have been achieved mainly through the shift away from coal burning power stations and the increases in renewables (especially off-shore wind farms). While the trend towards greener energy will continue, due to the speed and size of reduction required it is unlikely that it can be achieved by changes to national energy infrastructure alone. Such a significant reduction will require action across every sector including transport, housing, commercial property, industry and agriculture. Importantly, it will therefore require reduction in energy consumption levels, achieved in part by enormous investment in energy efficiency, but it will also require major behavioural change.
- 3.2 Reducing the size of the Council's estate is deemed fundamental to reducing energy consumption and improving the overall sustainability and efficiency of the estate. As such, the climate emergency is one of the primary drivers for the new Asset Management Strategy which is currently being prepared covering every aspect of the estate.
- 3.3 Linked to this, a fundamental aspect of reducing the size of the office estate will be future phases of the Changing the Workplace (CTW) Programme, which will deliver both asset rationalisation and cultural workforce changes. Through the CTW programme, the Council has already consolidated 13 city centre buildings into just 4, delivering a reduction in energy consumption levels as well as achieving financial savings and an improved staff and customer experience.
- 3.4 Beyond the city centre, in large part, the same benefits have not been realised. The CTW programme therefore continues to be rolled out in a phased approach to ensure that the Council has an affordable and sustainable estate which provides fit for purpose, good quality accommodation in the right locations. Inevitably there will be some buildings which have a high energy use that the Council will need to retain, such as the Town Hall and Civic Hall, and so here the focus will continue to be on exploring greener energy options and investment to reduce energy use.
- 3.5 The timeliness of this inquiry will enable the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board to consider the principles and proposals linked to Phase 2 of the CTW Programme as it continues to be rolled out across localities. The Board will also be able to consider the potential implications and challenges associated with this next phase of the programme in terms of trying to minimise energy costs and carbon impact, with a particular focus around the promotion of flexible and mobile ways of working and aiming to reduce car usage and facilitate clean transport choices.
- 3.6 The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Board's Inquiry into the reduction of energy consumption in Council buildings are now drafted and have been informed by the above issues and timeframe. These are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.7 The Scrutiny Board is requested to consider and formally agree the terms of reference for this Inquiry. However, in view of the proposed timeframe to complete this piece of Scrutiny work, arrangements have been made for the first session of this inquiry to take place during today's meeting.

4. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 32 where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.
- 4.1.2 As the Lead Director and Executive Member, the Director of Resources and Housing and Executive Member for Resources have been consulted on the draft terms of reference and have also been invited to attend today's meeting.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules state that, where appropriate, all terms of reference for work undertaken by Scrutiny Boards will include 'to review how and to what effect consideration has been given to the impact of a service or policy on all equality areas, as set out in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme'.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This inquiry provides a particular opportunity for Scrutiny to influence the development of the Council's new Asset Management Strategy and to also consider the principles and proposals linked to Phase 2 of the CTW Programme in terms of improving the overall sustainability and efficiency of the Council's estate. There are also strong links with the Best Council ambition to be an Efficient, Enterprising and Healthy Organisation.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 The key objectives of this inquiry are closely linked to the Council's Climate Emergency declaration.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 The Scrutiny Board's Inquiry sets out to review how the Council is reducing energy consumption levels within its own corporate buildings in order to minimise both cost and carbon impact.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 This report has no specific risk management implications.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 In accordance with its remit, the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board agreed to review how the Council is reducing energy consumption levels within its own corporate buildings in order to minimise both cost and carbon impact.

5.2 The terms of reference for this Inquiry have been drafted and are appended for the Scrutiny Board's consideration and agreement.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to consider and agree the draft terms of reference relating to the Scrutiny Board's Inquiry into the reduction of energy consumption in Council buildings.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.