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|--------------------------|---|
| Title of meeting: | Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Greening the City |
| Subject: | Impact of Recent Central Government Policy Changes to Climate Change in Portsmouth |
| Date of meeting: | 22 nd November 2023 Decision |
| Report by: | Kristina Downey - Principal Strategy Advisor- Climate Change Antonia Craze - Senior Energy Officer Felicity Harris - Green and Healthy City Coordinator David Emmett - Head of Waste Management Services Richard Pemberton - Transport Strategy Team Leader |
| Wards affected: | No specific impact on individual wards |

1. Requested by

1.1 Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Greening the City.

2. Purpose

2.1 To provide a broad analysis of the impacts of recent central government policy and target changes to Portsmouth's carbon net zero ambition, and associated co-benefits.

3. Information Requested

3.1 In 2019, Portsmouth City Council declared a local climate emergency and resolved to support efforts to make Portsmouth city net zero by 2030, ahead of the national 2050 target.

3.2 Portsmouth City Council recognises the clear benefits of breaking our reliance on fossil fuels and regaining a greener and more biodiverse city not just to carbon reduction, but the proven benefits to our resident's health, comfort, and costs. This is described within our 2022 Climate Change Strategy, as well as stating that "*our ambitions are linked to additional funding, powers, incentives, and policies developed by central government*".

3.3 Whilst detail and certainty are currently unclear, this report broadly describes the potential impacts of recent central government announcements on various national policy changes to Portsmouth's climate change ambition.

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Domestic Home Energy Use

- 3.4 On the 20th September 2023, the government announced directly to the public multiple changes to targets that have an impact on domestic energy use within Portsmouth such as:
- 3.4.1 The ban on the new installation of oil and LPG boilers for off-gas homes has been pushed back to 2035. 139 households currently heat their home through these sources in Portsmouth.
 - 3.4.2 The phase out of fossil fuel boilers, including gas, has also been pushed back to 2035 for homes that would face high upfront costs to change their heating system. This could account for 20% of UK housing and will result in 5 further years of gas boiler emissions, which impacts local air quality and has a high carbon footprint.
 - 3.4.3 Vouchers for owner occupiers under the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS) have been increased in value from £5,000 to £7,500. They can be used towards the installation of a new air source heat pump system. BUS has seen significantly lower uptake than planned, likely due to the high upfront costs required alongside the voucher as a new system can cost up to an average of £14,000 per household. This, alongside the delayed phase out of fossil fuel boilers is likely to result in a continued low uptake of the scheme.
 - 3.4.4 Proposals to require private landlords to improve the EPC rating of their properties to a minimum of a C have been scrapped. Current legislation requires private rental properties to have a minimum EPC score of E. The difference in fuel bills for tenants in an EPC E home compared to those in an EPC C is an average excess of £1,309. There are currently over 11,000 private rental households with an EPC of D or below in Portsmouth that will now longer have to be improved to an EPC C. This will have a huge impact on the fuel bills for these tenants, and the carbon footprint.
 - 3.4.5 Domestic energy use accounts for 30% of the city's total carbon emissions. As such, it is a key area to target in order to reach net zero emissions within the city. These targets will impact the ability to transition households to green heating sources, improve their energy efficiency and reduce their fuel bills.
 - 3.4.6 For information about these changes and support please contact [Switched On Portsmouth - Save Energy. Save Money. Save Carbon.](#) or through our freephone number 0800 260 5907.

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Waste Management

- 3.5 On Wednesday 20 September DERFA released a press release stating Environment Secretary is leading a new pragmatic approach to boost recycling rates in form of Simpler Recycling (formerly known as Consistency in Recycling).
- 3.6 DEFRA released a further statement on 21st October 2023 giving some detail of how Simpler Recycling differs from Consistency of collections. These differences include;
- A further exemption (is proposed) to allow all dry recyclables (paper and card, plastic, glass, and metal) to be collected together in one recycling bin (co-mingled) from households
 - Local authorities to provide food waste collection to all residents including flats by 31 March 2027
 - Local Authorities can continue to charge for them as per current arrangements.
- 3.7 The City Council along with Hampshire PI partner authorities have signed up to the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) - see background document list. This sets out the Hampshire Authorities preferred approach of twin stream recycling to meet the obligation of the Environment Act 2021.
- 3.8 Officers have set up meetings with waste disposal partners Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council (tripartite authorities) and the Project Integra partner Authorities to assess if there are any impacts of Simpler Recycling on the JMWMS.
- 3.9 Members will be kept updated on if there are any necessary changes or impacts through the Strategic Tripartite meetings and PI Strategic Board where Cllr Ashmore (Cabinet Member for Environmental Services) is the City Councils representative.

Nature

- 3.10 On 27th September 2023, the government delayed the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) which was intended to become a mandatory component of England's planning system in November 2023.
- 3.11 The (BNG) planning components were intended to include:
- The requirement that planning permissions will be subject to a 'standard' condition that applications must be accompanied by a 'biodiversity gain plan' setting out the measures proposed to achieve the 10% minimum gain will have

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effect from January 2024 – a delay from the original timeframe but not a lengthy one. Small sites will be in scope from April 2024

- Other types of authorisation – including NSIPs (National Significant Infrastructure Projects) – are planned to be brought into scope from 2025
- The present iteration of the Metric (by which BNG is calculated) will be put on a statutory footing in time for the requirement coming into force
- A government-run biodiversity ‘credits’ scheme will also be introduced, allowing developers to ‘buy’ BNG credits where they are unable to deliver on- or off-site BNG enhancements; and
- A register of off-site biodiversity ‘Gain Sites’ will be established to assist with monitoring and securing off-site BNG measures.

3.12 Whilst the government has delayed BNG implementation this only applies to major development, which has been delayed to January 2024, BNG implementation on minor development is still expected from April 2024. Plans are still moving ahead with regards to identifying a list of potential sites for BNG offsetting - on City Council owned land. There is expected to be a 10% BNG uplift on affected planning applications submitted from January / April respectively. The Emerging Local Plan is proposing to go further than national standards with an uplift to 20% BNG on some City Council owned sites in addition to the 10% BNG standard for the city as a whole. The government delays are enabling officers to get in place all necessary measures for effective delivery of BNG as well as to identify initiatives that can be 'backdated' against BNG requirements.

3.13 BNG could be a tool as a force for good in Portsmouth, combined with other drivers or tools such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the enhanced Biodiversity Duty. Councils must report on BNG through their Biodiversity Duty reports. A challenge for Portsmouth is that much of our development is on sites with low BNG and therefore the percentage uplift may not translate to much in absolute terms. Identifying strategic sites for offsetting could create real change - for biodiversity, well-being and climate resilience.

3.14 A challenge for the city remains in terms of inequitable access to and distribution of accessible natural green space. Enhancements through planning will be only part of a wider suite of greening measures needed to deliver this.

Transport

3.15 Transport is the main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and the climate change emergency. The following section outlines how the city council PCC are tackling this issue and the impact of recent Government announcements.

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Changes affecting electric vehicle sales and infrastructure

- 3.16 Recent Government announcements have delayed the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030 to 2035 as well as mandating legally binding targets for zero emission vehicle sales via the Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) mandate.
- 3.17 The ZEV Mandate requires that by 2030, a minimum of 80% of all new cars sold, and 70% of all new vans sold, are zero emission. For reference, 16.6% of all new cars sold in the UK in 2022 were zero emission.
- 3.18 The Government's Plan for Drivers, published October 2023, proposed changes to processes aiming to speed up EV charge point installation and grid connections and allowing more private charge points to be installed under permitted development rights; it also stated new guidance on safe cross-pavement electric vehicle charging arrangements will be published. These changes may support faster roll-out of EV charging for many properties in Portsmouth without off-street parking.
- 3.19 Whilst the changes announced by the Government may slightly slow down the transition to zero emission vehicles, a fast pace of transition is still expected and this does not alter PCC's plan for extensive EV infrastructure rollout in the coming years to meet forecast growth in numbers of electric vehicles on our streets.
- 3.20 The Council has recently re-submitted a bid to central Government for a third phase of the on-street residential charging scheme which if successful will see 320 additional charge points introduced in residential streets around the city.
- The Council intends to bring forwards a proposed new Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVI) Strategy which would set policies to support an ongoing programme of improvements to EV infrastructure provision further into the future. This Strategy has four main objectives:
 - Prioritise EV infrastructure for residents, enabling conversion to electric vehicles
 - Transform infrastructure provision in Portsmouth to promote it as an EV friendly destination for those visiting and working here
 - Support fleet conversion to EV through providing supporting infrastructure to meet their needs
 - Deliver in partnership EV infrastructure to support shared and public transport modes conversion to EV
- 3.21 It is hoped the EVI Strategy will be adopted by the end of 2023, in order to support a business case to central Government being developed for use of £3.682m allocated to PCC for EVI, predominantly for residents, but also supporting car clubs.
- 3.22 Additionally, through a joint PCC/ Hampshire County Council/ First Bus bid, £12.5m of funding from Government's Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) fund was secured in 2022/23, and 62 electric buses will be entering service during 2024 on

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routes operated by First Bus in Portsmouth/Fareham/Gosport. The Council intends to continue working with bus operators to seek to convert the remainder of the bus fleet serving the city to electric propulsion in the coming years.

Plan for Drivers - Government Policy Paper, published 2nd October 2023¹

3.23 The Government's "Plan for Drivers" Policy Paper sets out a 30-point list of policy/regulatory changes that Government intend to introduce to counter a perception in some quarters that some transport schemes and initiatives are "anti-driver". Many of these actions are high level with limited detail and will require the publication of additional guidance, legislation, or direction from Government to Local Transport Authorities before any impact on PCC is known, or the actions can be implemented. Timescales for publication of additional guidance /regulations have not yet been set out.

3.24 Some of the actions set out in this paper which may be relevant to the Council include:

- New guidance and processes for electric vehicle charge point installation- summarised in the previous section.
- Support for better parking apps and technology, and other changes to parking. Government states that by Autumn 2024 it will deliver the new National Parking Platform (NPP), supporting data sharing across many parking providers across the UK, ending the need to use multiple parking apps. The Government also states it will consult on changes to guidance relating to parking for Local Authorities.
- Portsmouth City Council is already engaged in the NPP project. The NPP could help to make parking easier and more efficient for drivers in the city by simplifying payment and providing better information on car park availability- which could help reduce emissions from drivers searching for a parking space.
- Funding for updates to traffic lights and associated technology. The policy paper states £70 million will be made available nationally to support traffic signal upgrades through application of new technology.
- As a city with a large network of traffic signals and air quality concerns, this funding may present opportunities for Portsmouth to improve the efficiency of some signalised junctions, which could help reduce traffic delay and associated vehicle emissions.
- New powers to tackle anti-social driving. The Government has stated it will issue guidance to National Highways and Councils to support efforts to tackle a number of issues such as littering by drivers and vehicles which have been modified to be excessively noisy. Vehicle modifications which increase the exhaust noise of a vehicle may also increase its greenhouse gas emissions so

¹ [The plan for drivers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)



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there is a possibility enforcement against antisocially noisy vehicles could deliver some emissions benefits. Within PCC, a cross-directorate working group is being developed to investigate vehicle noise enforcement, but currently further guidance/legislation is required from the Government on responsibilities for this potential activity.

- Support for roadworks Lane Rental schemes: The policy paper states the Government wishes to make it quicker and easier for Councils to introduce Lane Rental schemes, which aim to reduce the impact of roadworks by incentivising utilities to avoid the busiest roads at the busiest times and/or speed up roadworks.
- PCC's Local Transport Plan Policy P includes a commitment to explore a Lane Rental scheme for the city, so in the event of the described guidance/legislation changes occurring, this change may support PCC's plans.

3.25 As previously stated, many of the actions identified in the Plan for Drivers require further action by DfT before they come into force. Therefore, there is no current impact on PCC's transport programmes/projects and current key projects such as implementation of the Enterprise Car Club, the Active Pompey Neighbourhoods scheme, and delivery of bus priority infrastructure will be unaffected.

3.26 In summary, the ZEV mandate will still require that 80% of cars and 70% of vans sold by 2030 are zero emission. PCC are therefore continuing to plan for and deliver the infrastructure required to support this change and the city's 2030 net zero target.

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Signed by James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services for and on behalf of the directorates authoring this report.

Appendices: None

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

| Title of document | Location |
|---|---|
| Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy | Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk) |
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