1 Executive Summary

1.1 The attached report (Appendix 1), which was considered at the Cabinet on 3 September 2019, summarises the main implications for the council of climate change and the climate emergency. It identifies a number of issues for further development.

1.2 The Cabinet agreed the report’s recommendations.

1.3 Full Council is asked to note the contents of the report to the Cabinet and to agree Recommendation 2.1.1, namely the adoption of the national government target of net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 (i.e. a reduction in GHGs by at least 100% of 1990 levels by 2050), whilst maintaining the previously agreed target of making the borough ‘carbon neutral’ by 2030. This has the effect of amending the terms of the resolution passed by the council on 15 April 2019, on the grounds that making the borough ‘carbon zero by 2050’ is impracticable, as some processes will inevitably continue to produce greenhouse gas emissions, and that, consequently, some degree of carbon offsetting will continue to be necessary. The proposed new target also gives a clear baseline year (1990), against
which to measure progress.

2 Recommendations

2.1 To note the contents of the report presented to the Cabinet on 3 September 2019 (see Appendix 1) and the decisions taken at that meeting.

2.2 To agree to adopt the targets set out in Recommendation 2.1.1 of the Cabinet report, namely the adoption of the national government target of net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 (i.e. a reduction in GHGs by at least 100% of 1990 levels by 2050), whilst maintaining the target of making the borough ‘carbon neutral’ by 2030.

3 Background

3.1 At its meeting on 15 April 2019, the Full Council passed a resolution, which called upon the Mayor to declare a climate and health emergency and to pledge to make the borough ‘carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon zero by 2050’. The resolution also called on the Mayor to work in conjunction with national and other government bodies to achieve the 2030 target to determine and implement best practice methods to limit global warming to less than 1.5°C.

3.2 At the same meeting, a report was agreed, which outlined a draft Air Quality Action Plan for the borough. This was described as Part One of the borough’s strategic intent regarding air quality and climate change. The attached report, which was considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 3 September, focuses on climate change and complements the work on air quality.

3.3 The report begins by briefly setting the scene nationally and locally. In Section 4, it describes the foundations of the proposed approach to addressing climate change. This includes a ‘Green Audit’ of the council’s functions, as agreed by Full Council in April and a planned communications strategy. The report then outlines the borough’s planning framework and how it will overlay a corporate approach to tackling climate change, before giving consideration to the implications of climate change to specific service areas, setting out current and planned activity.

3.4 The Cabinet report should be seen as contributing to the establishment of a baseline and as a precursor to a detailed action plan. It is not a strategy yet - hence the use of the term strategic intent. The focus of the report is predominantly on the short to medium term. The planned Green Audit and the other work outlined in the report is expected to help clarify priorities for the longer term, which will then need to be costed and built into the council’s service and financial planning arrangements.

3.5 The implication of the report is that major changes will need to made to contemporary ways of life – for example, much lower energy consumption, much less distance travelled both for commercial and domestic purposes, much less meat consumption, much more energy efficient housing, a re-
greening of the land, and a change of attitude towards economic growth as the main measure of economic development.

3.6 Much of the activity outlined in the report concerns things happening or needing to happen within the council, but to succeed, it will be necessary to secure the active involvement and support of the local community and other stakeholders, not least businesses.

3.7 The council has a major role to play, as a provider and consumer of services, but also as the leading representative body of the local community. In this latter regard, powerful and effective communications and engagement with local people and other stakeholders will be essential.

4 Policy Implications & Corporate Priorities

4.1 These are considered in Section 5 of the report to the 3 September 2019 Cabinet meeting (attached).

5 Alternatives considered

5.1 This is addressed in Section 6 of the report to the 3 September 2019 Cabinet meeting.

6 Consultation

6.1 This is set out in in Section 7 of the report to the 3 September 2019 Cabinet meeting.

7 Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

7.1.1 These are considered in Section 8.1 of the report to the 3 September 2019 Cabinet meeting.

7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 These are considered in Section 8.2 of the report to the 3 September 2019 Cabinet meeting.

7.3 Equalities Implications

7.3.1 These are considered in Section 8.3 of the report to the 3 September 2019 Cabinet meeting.

7.4 Other Implications relevant to this report:

7.4.1 These are set out in the body of the report to the 3 September 2019 Cabinet meeting.
8 Background Information used in the preparation of this report

8.1 The report to the 3 September 2019 Cabinet meeting entitled ‘Newham Air Quality and Climate Change Strategic Intent Part Two: Addressing Climate Change’, which is attached to the present report as Appendix 1.