

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 17 February 2021

Climate Change Strategic Development Framework



Cllr Julia Jessel, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change said,

“Climate change is a huge issue which impacts all of us, both now and in the future. It is crucial that we take steps now to tackle climate change and its effects, so we can all look forward to a greener future for the county.

This framework reflects on the work we have done so far to tackle climate change in the county and sets out how we will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Everyone can play their part in reducing our carbon emissions. This will take years, not months, but I am confident that with all of our services taking action, and through our work with partners and the wider community, we will be able to reach this target.”

Report Summary:

The purpose of this report is to obtain Cabinet approval for the Climate Change Strategic Development Framework.

This document sets out, in simple terms, our approach to the complex challenge of achieving net carbon zero which is a legal requirement set by government in May 2019.

The document provides a refreshed carbon base line for the Authority, measured in 2018/19, so that the scale of the challenge is understood. It is intended that a system is put in place to monitor and report progress on an annual basis.

The framework also sets out the authority’s role in influencing both the local and national agenda, working with key stakeholders and ensuring that County Council Members are informed and seen as climate change champions for the community that they serve.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes and approves (subject to any final minor changes required by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change) the Authority’s Climate Change Strategic Development Framework document.
- b. Notes the progress that has been made in reducing the Authority’s carbon emissions since 1991.

- c. Notes the significant positive carbon reduction that has been made on the Authority's own carbon emissions since the declaration of the Climate Change Emergency in July 2019.

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| Local Members Interest |
| N/A |

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Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

I recommend that Cabinet:

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Report of the Director of Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Reasons for Recommendations:

Background

1. The County Council has championed the climate change agenda for many years and our carbon reduction strategy, Green Shoots, published in 2011 built on previous commitments to this agenda.
2. In practical terms, actions taken by the authority over the last ten years such as, street light lamp replacement programmes, building energy efficiency, material reuse, minimising car business mileage, development of energy from waste and championing waste minimisation have all had a positive impact on the authority's carbon emissions.
3. With the setting of new legislation in May 2019 the UK became the first major economy to pass a law requiring the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. This means that the country needs to remove as much carbon from the atmosphere as it emits.
4. Following the publication of the new legislation the County Council committed itself to this agenda by declaring a climate change emergency, allocating specific funding to drive forward climate change plans and set up an all-party group to review progress made to date and suggest initial ideas to reduce the County Council's CO2 emissions further. This work resulted in the publication of a Climate Change Action

Plan in November 2020. The plan lists 22 initial actions which will be taken forward with progress being reviewed later in 2021. The Action Plan can be viewed [here](#).

Refresh of SCC Carbon Baseline

5. One of the activities within the Climate Change Action Plan was to review the authority's carbon baseline. In order to do this expert advice was obtained and it was agreed to use data from 2018/19 as this would provide the most comprehensive up to date position.
6. Establishing a baseline and ensuring consistent monitoring and review is complex at an organisational level. Previous authority carbon baselines have captured building and street light energy consumption, business mileage and highway management fleet emissions. The 2018/19 review extended the scope to include waste management and home to school transport CO2 emissions. Both areas are under the direct control of the authority and so it was thought sensible to include in the new baseline.
7. The review of the authority's carbon base line established that in 2018/19 SCC's agreed measured activities contributed 50,651 tonnes of CO2 to the atmosphere. Whist significant, this is less than the 94,060 tonnes (excluding waste and home to school transport) measured in 2011/12 and the 173,605 tonnes (excluding waste and home to school transport) measured in 1990.
8. Following the declaration of a Climate Change Emergency the authority switched to a green energy tariff for all its building and street lighting. The full benefit of this will be measured when all the data for 19/20 is available, but it is anticipated that a reduction of some 15,000 tonnes of CO2 will have been made meaning that the authority's carbon emissions in 19/20 are likely to be in the region of 35,000 tonnes. This means that the previous target set by the authority in Green Shoots to emit less than or equal to 34,721 tonnes of CO2 e by 2050 would have been delivered 30 years early, even though the authority's CO2 scope has now been widened to include household waste disposal and commissioned home to school transport movements.
9. Although the above carbon reduction achievement is significant, it is recognised by the authority that it has been achieved, in part, by the academisation of schools meaning that some school energy consumption figures are no longer included. This fact plays into the important role of the authority to influence and assist where possible on reducing CO2 emissions throughout Staffordshire. This is important as Staffordshire County Council's 2019/20 emissions are less than 1% of total emissions emitted in Staffordshire which are estimated at some 6m tonnes of CO 2 pa (2018/19 figures).

Climate Change Strategic Development Framework

10. To complement the Climate Change Action Plan and to provide an update to Green Shoots publication, a Climate Change Strategic Development Framework has been developed which is attached as Appendix 1.

11. The purpose of the document is to describe what has been achieved so far and set out how the authority will achieve net carbon zero by 2050. The document provides a background and context to this agenda and describes Staffordshire's climate change risks.
12. The framework explains our priority climate change themes which have been shaped by the all-party working group set up in 2020 and sets out our approach to delivery working both internally (staff and Members) and working with partners and the Staffordshire community.
13. Working with partners and the Staffordshire community is going to be critical to ensure that the wider benefits of tackling climate change are realised. These benefits include ensuring Staffordshire is more resilient to extreme weather events and public health gains from improved air quality and an increase in active travel. There will also be an opportunity to super-charge the green economy in Staffordshire linking in with local and national economic strategies.
14. Finally the document recognises the critical importance of reviewing progress towards our stated goal and it is intended to publish an annual report each year which will detail progress on the previous year's action plan and set out the agreed activities for the coming year.
15. A community impact assessment (CIA) has been undertaken for the Climate Change Framework and is attached as Appendix 2. The CIA identifies potential impacts and recommends mitigations which will need to be considered as work progresses on this important agenda.
16. It is acknowledged that the achievement of net carbon zero for the authority, and the wider Staffordshire community, is a marathon not a sprint and it is likely that further advances in technology will be required in order to achieve the end goal.

Legal Implications

17. The approval and publication of the Climate Change Strategic Development Framework provides an outline of the road map to net carbon zero which is now a legal obligation for all organisations to achieve by 2050.
18. The approval of the framework confirms the authority's commitment to achieving this legal commitment either by direct actions or working with key stakeholders and communities to achieve an improved environment for future generations.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

19. The carbon reductions achieved over the last 10 years have contributed to the authority's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) by delivering substantial savings either by a reduction in energy use, reduction in raw material production and reduction in landfill tax.
20. It is likely that over the next 30 years additional funds will be required to pump prime carbon reduction initiatives and in some cases, particularly in the area of transport

emissions, further advances in technology and manufacturing will be required before solutions can be adopted which are affordable for the authority.

21. The authority has committed specific funds in its MTFS to push forward with the Climate Change agenda with £600,000 committed this financial year and a further £2m committed up to 2024/25.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Climate Change Strategic Development Framework

Appendix 2 – Community Impact Assessment

Contact Details

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