Staffordshire County Council

Climate Change

Draft Action Plan 2021- 2025

Doing our Bit to make Staffordshire Sustainable

Introduction

Staffordshire County Council recognises that climate change is the biggest environmental challenge facing the world today and has reflected this by identifying climate change as one of the four key principles in the Council's Strategic Plan.

Staffordshire County Council committed itself to this agenda by declaring a climate change emergency in July 2019 to also achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Strategic Development Framework released in February 2021 sets out how the authority will work towards achieving its carbon emissions target.

The County Council recognises that a range of actions are needed to stop or reduce the Council’s carbon emissions. These actions are to either stop carbon emissions, develop ways to remove carbon that is already in the atmosphere (sequestration) or help communities and businesses prepare for the impact of a changing climate (adaptation). In achieving these actions, the authority will play its part in the global effort to reduce the impact of Climate Change and meet its net carbon zero target.

The Council will monitor its carbon emissions each year, to track the success of these actions. This plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to deliver the Council’s commitment to the climate change agenda.

Simon Tagg - Staffordshire County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

Key Themes

Theme 1: Carbon Reduction

Theme 2: Air Quality

Theme 3: Natural Environment

Theme 4: Waste

Theme 5: Behavioural Change

Carbon Reduction

The Carbon Reduction theme has the most amount of actions within the plan. These actions cover internal staff training, resource use and efficient operation of services as well as starting to change the way that we work.
The actions also look to include climate change thinking in policy and Governance processes.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
CN-01-21	Ensure climate change and sustainability impacts are considered in decision making, including land disposals and budgets.	• Revise the Cabinet Report standard template to include a section on climate change. • Business case templates to include financial benefits or consequences of delivering low carbon alternatives. • Procurement process to include consideration of the impacts on climate change.	• Mar 2022 • Mar 2022 • Mar 2022
CN-02-21	Ensure sufficient resources are available to support business areas in identifying opportunities and understanding carbon impacts.	• Identify the resources required to progress the climate change agenda across the council. • Liaise with the Staffordshire Business Environment Network (sben) to identify any opportunity to share expertise between organisations. • Climate Change team to provide expertise and support to business areas to develop ideas to deliver innovation.	• Mar 2022 • From Nov 2021 • From Nov 2021
CN-03-21	Research sequestration and other offset potential actions.	• Identify best practice ideas from other local authorities and industry. • Consider the outcome of the Renewable Energy Audit. • Outline options and make recommendations for sequestration and/or offset projects.	• Mar 2022 • Mar 2022 • Mar 2022

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
CN-04-21	Continued liaison with district and borough councils to discuss how planning considerations can include climate change mitigation and adaptation.	• Ensure climate change is a standing agenda item for the Staffordshire Development Officers Group.	• From Nov 2021
CN-05-21	Invest in improving driving styles to reduce preventative carbon emissions.	• Roll out eLearning green driving module for Highways.	• Dec 2021
CN-06-21	Ensure effective vehicle utilisation for entitled home to school transport pupils.	• Issue all school children with a Smart Pass to monitor usage to identify any inefficiencies in the system. • Evaluate results and consider if any service changes can be made.	• Mar 2022 • Mar 2022
CN-07-21	Investigate the potential of using pick up points for Home to School transport and Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils.	• Liaise with Members, Families & Communities Service and SEN schools to see what scope there is to introduce pick up and drop off points.	• From Nov 2021

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
CN-08-21	Increase the number of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.	• Work with district and borough councils to agree a consistent approach to EV infrastructure across Staffordshire. • Investigate the potential to upgrade electricity supply in SCC building stock to facilitate EV charging in retained property portfolio. • Develop an EV Infrastructure Strategy and Low Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Action Plan • Maximise opportunities to bid for Department for Transport funding, including workplace charging fund (at SCC buildings) and on street residential charging fund. • Work with Amey to roll out EV charging across all highways depots.	• Mar 2023 • Mar 2022 • Mar 2024 • From Nov 2021 • From Nov 2021
CN-09-21	Investigate the transition of fleet to alternative fuels or more carbon efficient options where appropriate by 2025.	• Consider the transition of fleet vehicles to low carbon fuels or low carbon technology.	• Mar 2022
CN-10-21	Reduce the emissions from Highways vehicles.	• Analyse telemetrics data to optimise routes and driver behaviour. • Investigate potential for introducing automated systems, such as automatic gritting.	• Mar 2022 • Mar 2022

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
CN-I1-21	Complete a review of all SCC owned or leased buildings with service areas to identify future needs.	• Develop business asset plans in each district and borough and analyse the business assets for long term functionality.	• Jun 2022
CN-I2-21	Pilot using warm air from data centre to heat floor above.	• Develop agreement with contractors for provision of air cooling system at QB data centre. • Advance planning for air cooling system at County Archive.	• Mar 2022 • Mar 2022
CN-I3-21	Improve energy efficiency of all suitable SCC owned buildings.	• Collate data on running costs, energy usage, type and condition of lighting, boilers and insulation. • Calculate running cost and impact per square metre. • Identify the properties that are most inefficient. • Develop programme of work that looks at replacing lighting, insulation and boilers.	• Mar 2022 • Dec 2021 • Dec 2021 • From Jun 2022
CN-I4-21	Install Building Energy Management Systems to all suitable buildings.	• Identify SCC owned buildings that do not have a Building Energy Management System (BEM) and prioritise installations.	• Dec 2022

Carbon Reduction

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
CN-15-21	Move to battery operated plant tools wherever possible.	• Review SCC owned equipment and usage. Replace where possible. • Establish potential for battery operated tools to be specified in future ground maintenance contracts and apply if possible.	• TBA • Nov 2021
CN-16-21	Emissions Monitoring.	• Continue to monitor and report the Council's annual carbon emissions.	• Ongoing

Air Quality

The Councils single highest contributor to emissions comes from home to school transport fuel consumption. This activity accounts for 27% of our overall total carbon footprint. The Council aims to improve air quality by working with vehicle operators within the county through encouraging the introduction of more efficient engines as well as using the authorities influence on vehicle operators within the county to reduce fossil fuel use.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
AQ-01-21	Investigate the impact of introducing a standard requirement for Euro5 or better for home to school transport contracts.	• Market test feasibility (cost & availability) of including Euro5 as a standard requirement.	• Aug 2022
AQ-02-21	Work with local bus operators to improve the energy efficiency of public transport in Staffordshire.	• Agree a bus service improvement plan with interested local bus operators with an agreed transition path to low emission buses.	• Mar 2022

Natural Environment

The natural environment is key to removing carbon out of the atmosphere, through carbon sequestration. The focus of this theme is to maximise the benefit the councils land holding has on the climate. New land management opportunities will be identified to further enhance the positive carbon impact of County land with additional benefits of enhanced biodiversity.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
NE-01-21	Commission a study to determine the current sequestration / storage of carbon in natural habitats on SCC landholdings and the potential to increase it through tree planting and habitat enhancement.	• Engage with consultants to produce a review of land/habitats in Staffordshire (including carbon impact, carbon storage benefits, potential opportunities, other benefits such as social and GIS data). • Review report outcomes and recommendations and produce business case to take forward recommendations. • Develop a standard list of attributes accessible to all GIS users.	• Mar 2022 • Sep 2022 • Sep 2022
NE-02-21	Undertake a programme of tree planting and habitat enhancement.	• Identify opportunities for small and large scale tree planting. • Identify opportunities for carbon sequestration through habitat enhancement.	• Sep 2022 • Sep 2022
NE-03-21	Review policies that impact on our management of habitats.	• Review land management policies and consider options to lower carbon intensity and/or improve biodiversity.	• Mar 2022

Waste

Waste is the Council's biggest source of emissions making up 38% of the total Emissions. These emissions include not only the emissions from the waste generated by the Council but also Staffordshire households. It measures the emissions from handling the waste at the recycling centres and the emissions from operating the energy recovery facilities for handling all of Staffordshire's household waste

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
W-01-21	Consider the long term capacity needs for Energy Recovery Facilities (ERF) in Staffordshire.	• Consider contract requirements for an ERF at Hanford. • Plan for contract requirements when the ERF at Four Ashes reverts entirely to SCC in 2039.	• Mar 2022 • Dec 2023
W-02-21	Plateau growth in waste to 0% by 2025, using 2019 pre-pandemic tonnage as the baseline.	• Deliver communications campaigns to encourage behaviour changes. • Work with district and borough councils collection authorities to identify common opportunities to boost recycling levels. • Hold a climate change & waste conference.	• Ongoing • Dec 2022 • Mar 2022
W-03-21	Reduce food waste and garden waste in the residual waste stream.	• Investigate options for a single food waste procurement contract to assist the districts and borough councils to introduce separate food waste collections ahead of proposed legislative changes. • Promote use of home composting bins. • Continue to support the Waste Savvy volunteer programme.	• Mar 2022 • Dec 2021 • Ongoing

Waste

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
W-04-21	Increase recycling at the Recycling Centres.	• Deliver a communications campaigns to reduce non recyclable waste and encourage good recycling habits. • Regularly review the range of materials that can be recycled at the Recycling Centres to react to new opportunities.	• Ongoing • From Nov 2021

W-05-21	Ensure that haulage from Recycling Centres is completed with the maximum permitted weight for each load.	• Carry out tool box talks with site staff on the importance of compacting and how to do it.
		• Ensure that:
		  ◦ All plant operatives have appropriate JCB training for efficient use of equipment.
		  ◦ Load height in containers forms part of supervisor/ team leaders routine.
		  ◦ Minimum / maximum load height indicators are drawn on each container.
			• From Mar 2022
			• From Mar 2022

W-06-21	Investigate feasibility of moving to alternative fuels for the Recycling Centres haulage and onsite vehicles.	• Consider the potential for use of alternative fuels/low carbon fuels to be specified for outsourced haulage and owned vehicles and equipment.	• From Mar 2022
W-07-21	Development of Staffordshire Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to reduce haulage requirements.	• Progress scoping for Staffordshire MRF.	• Mar 2022

Behavioural Change

Climate change is a problem that is facing everyone. To tackle the issues it will need everyone to make changes to their daily lives. The council plan to work with business and other Councils within Staffordshire to produce a joined-up approach to tackling climate change that reaches beyond just the actions of the Authority.

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
BC-01-21	Offer funding through the Climate change action fund.	• Launch Round 2 of the fund.	• Nov 2021
BC-02-21	Communication and behaviour change campaign for staff and residents on climate change.	• Increase climate change awareness in all staff through a variety of media channels under the Making Staffordshire Sustainable branding. • Increase climate change awareness in residents through the Making Staffordshire Sustainable branding and by delivering bespoke internally developed campaigns, supporting and promoting national campaigns and working in partnership with the district and borough council's. • Help to promote and share climate change information with schools.	• Mar 2022 • Ongoing • Jun 2022

Behavioural Change

Ref	Description	Action	Proposed Timeline
BC-03-21	Develop an adaptation strategy and plans) for SCC to reduce the impact of the changing climate.	• Develop a Climate Change Adaptation plan.	• Dec 2023
BC-04-21	Work with businesses to raise awareness and reduce their carbon footprint.	• Work with Staffordshire Business Environment Network (sben) to identify opportunities to forward climate change agenda. • sben to roll out carbon calculator for businesses.	• From Nov 2021 • From Nov 2021
BC-05-21	Establish a Sustainability Board.	• Board to set a countywide strategic direction in ways of working to support the transition to Net Zero.	• Mar 2022

Programme Funding

- The Council has dedicated and secured over £5.4m of support to our net carbon zero journey over and above usual budget allocations.
- A further £1m Investment Fund has been made available over a 5 year timeframe, specifically for Sustainability projects to support the climate change agenda, which will be subject to successful business case bids.
- The Council pledges to maximise external funding opportunities that will assist in the delivery of this plan.

County Council Climate Change Investment	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Investment
	£	£	£	£	£	£
MTFS Budget - Revenue Funding	690,000	585,580	585,580	285,000	285,000	2,431,160
External Funding						
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme	0	3,005,350	0	0	0	3,005,350
Total Investment (Internal & External funding)	690,000	3,590,930	585,580	285,000	285,000	5,436,510

Programme Roadmap

- The overarching KPI is our annual carbon footprint, which is currently 37,967 tCO2e – this KPI needs to be on the trajectory outlined below in order to remain on target to achieve our commitment
- Whilst our aspirations are high, it is realised that we can not reach net zero without some carbon sequestration or offsetting, this action forms a key role within this plan