

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday 25 October 2022

Climate Change Annual Report (2022) and Draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 2 (November 2022)

Recommendations

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Review the Climate Change Annual Report (2021/22), note the progress that has been made and make recommendations which can be considered for next year's climate change annual report.
- b. Review the draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 2 (November 2022) (CCAP) and make suggestions for any required amendments prior to formal Cabinet approval in November 2022.

Report of Cllr Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change

Summary

What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?

1. This report provides Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members with an update on progress with one of the core priorities in our Strategic Plan namely 'Tackle climate change, enhance our environment, and make Staffordshire more sustainable'.
2. The report references two key documents; our annual Climate Change progress (as required by the approved Climate Change Strategic Development Framework) and the draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 2 (November 2022).
3. It is intended that an annual report will be produced and submitted to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee each year so that progress on our commitment to become net carbon zero by 2050 can be tracked. The 2021/22 report is the second to be produced since the Council declared a climate change emergency in July 2019 and Committee Members are asked for comments on how the report can be improved in subsequent years.

4. Climate Change Action Plan, revision 2 (November 2022) follows on from CCAP 1 which was approved and launched in autumn 2020. The revised CCAP is currently in draft and will be formally approved by Cabinet in November 2022. Committee Members are asked to help shape the final document before it is approved although it should be noted that it is subject to an annual review to ensure that it stays relevant to changes in technology and events.

Report

Background

5. The County Council has championed the climate change agenda for many years and our previous carbon reduction strategy, Green Shoots, published in 2011 built on previous commitments to this agenda.
6. 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.
7. Following the publication of the new legislation the County Council committed itself to this agenda by declaring a climate change emergency and setting 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 1 (CCAP 1) in November 2020, followed by the revision CCAP 2 in October 2021.
8. Strong progress is being made on the 33 specific actions contained in CCAP 2 and it should be noted that some actions have a timeframe of more than one year.
9. Additional resources were secured during 2021 to develop and promote internal and external communications on the climate change agenda, focused activity has linked in with regional and national events along with the development of our brand "Sustainable Staffordshire".
10. An internal project group, with officer representatives from all appropriate teams, has been meeting regularly since December 2020 and this group was used to develop the initial Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). CCAP is envisaged to be a plan which will be current until 2025, although it will be reviewed yearly, by the officer group, to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose. There is now a need to ensure that there is appropriate member input before finalising the document.

11. Work has also been taking place with the District and Borough Councils to see how efforts across the Staffordshire local authority network can be better co-ordinated to maximum impact.
12. This resulted in the formation of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board in January 2022, with an 'all Staffordshire Council' pledge being formally approved by the respective cabinets throughout the County during June and July 2022.

Annual Climate Change Report

13. The annual climate change report is attached as Appendix 1.
14. The report notes a significant reduction in carbon emissions of c.5,282 tCo2e from 2019/20 to 2020/21, a reduction of some 15%.
15. The report provides an indication of the carbon emissions by area of operation following an audit of the 2020/21 data. The format is consistent with the refresh of the 2018/19 carbon baseline carried out for Climate Change Strategic Development Framework.
16. The report also provides an overview of achievements around the five core themes contained in the Climate Change Strategic Development Framework which link to the actions in CCAP 2.
17. The report provides details on the Climate Change Member Fund that continued community engagement last year. As set out in the report, 102 grants were awarded totalling £52,930 of grant funding being distributed through the County.
18. Information on the distribution of the awards by district/borough areas in 2020/21 is provided below:
 - a. CCDC Area £7410
 - b. ESBC Area £8539
 - c. LDC Area £5875
 - d. NULBC Area £9200
 - e. SSDC Area £8194
 - f. SBC Area £6816
 - g. SMDC Area £5000
 - h. TBC Area £1896
19. Committee Members are asked to review the annual report (attached as Appendix 1) and consider what improvements can be made to the reporting format in future years.

Draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 2 (November 2022)

20. The draft CCAP, revision 2 is attached as Appendix 2 and as explained in paragraph 10 above this is intended to be a plan which will be current until 2025.
21. The revised CCAP has been developed with input from officers of an internal officer group as well as oversight from the Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change.
22. As mentioned in paragraph 8 above, several actions in the initial CCAP have a timescale greater than 1 year. Where appropriate a few CCAP 2 actions have been continued into this CCAP, revision 2.
23. Committee Members are asked to review the information in the Climate Change Action Plan (attached as Appendix 2) and suggest amendments prior to formal approval by Cabinet in November 2022. It should be noted that the action plan will be subject to an annual review to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

Summary

24. Positive progress has been made on the Climate Change agenda since last Autumn.
25. The 2022 Annual Report outlines the main achievements made and records a significant reduction in the Council's carbon emissions from 2019/20 to 2020/21.
26. It is intended to formally approve the CCAP, revision 2 in November 2022 once any recommendations made by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been carefully considered.

Link to Strategic Plan

27. The information in this report has a direct link to the Council's Strategic Plan as Climate Change is one of the five priorities which help shape all that we do.
28. The annual report will help us track our progress on this important agenda and the actions contained in the CCAP will ensure that all relevant areas of the Council are able to contribute to the target of becoming net carbon zero by 2050.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

29. As climate change runs through all of the Council's operations and activities this is a matter that is likely to be of increasing interest to all overview and scrutiny committees going forward.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Climate Change Annual Report (2022)

Appendix 2 – Draft Climate Change Action Plan, revision 2

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