

## **Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 20 September 2023**

### **Staffordshire Climate Change Adaptation Strategy**



**Councillor Simon Tagg, Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change said,**

"Climate change is a critical issue facing Staffordshire. We can expect summers to be drier, winters wetter and more extreme weather events to become more frequent.

Councils have made a commitment to reduce emissions which is important, this alone is not sufficient. Even if we immediately reduce our emissions to zero the climate will still change. We must also focus on building resilience to our services and local environment as well helping communities and businesses cope with the

effects of the changing climate.

The Adaptation Strategy identifies how we can better prepare ourselves to respond and adapt to the changing climate. Working together Staffordshire Councils can help to build a positive future"

#### **Report Summary:**

Building resilience to climate change is recognised as a priority for Staffordshire and the Staffordshire Sustainability Board agreed to prepare a joint Adaptation Strategy. The Strategy includes a range of high-level objectives to reduce exposure to climate change risk and to capitalise on new opportunities to provide people with a safe, comfortable place to live and work.

It is proposed this Strategy will provide a suitable framework to allow individual councils to develop their own Adaptation delivery plans encouraging consistency and partnership working across the councils and other partners in a collaborative nature.

On 20 March 2023 all members of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board agreed to take the Adaptation Strategy through their own decision making processes.

## **Recommendations**

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes and approves the Staffordshire Adaptation Strategy.
- b. Approves the development of a Staffordshire County Council Adaptation Plan that ensures all services and portfolios consider adaptation in their day-to-day work and decision making.



## **Cabinet – Wednesday 20 September 2023**

### **Staffordshire Climate Change Adaptation Strategy**

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

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes and approves the Staffordshire Adaptation Plan.
- b. Approves the development of a Staffordshire County Council Adaptation Plan that ensures all services and portfolios consider adaptation in their day-to-day work and decision making.

#### **Local Member Interest:**

N/A

#### **Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills**

##### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

1. Our climate is changing and will continue to do so because of greenhouse gas emissions. Even if we substantially reduce or even eliminate our emissions immediately the effects of climate change will continue.
2. Staffordshire is experiencing the impact of climate change. For example, the record heat last year where temperatures exceeded 40 degrees for the first time is more likely to occur due to climate change alongside the increasing number of damaging storms and floods over recent years.
3. We need to take steps to protect our local environment and livelihoods to make the county more resilient to future climate changes.
4. Adaptation is understanding the risk and vulnerabilities associated with the changing climate and considering ways to prevent or minimise the damage it causes. As our climate changes we need to act to put measures in place to allow for quality of life to be maintained and protect the economy and environment now and in the future.
5. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment sets out the risks and opportunities facing the UK from climate change. The West Midlands Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan 2021-2026 looked at these risks and opportunities in relation to how climate change could

impact the West Midlands. The information from this plan was used to understand the risks and opportunities for Staffordshire.

6. Local Authorities have an important role in raising awareness and empowering local communities and businesses by sharing information on how impacts can be managed and what we can all do to help.
7. The Adaptation Strategy includes a range of objectives to reduce exposure to climate risk and provides the framework for the Staffordshire County Council Adaptation Plan to be developed.
8. The Adaptation Plan will align with other relevant plans such as the Staffordshire County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy approved in March this year.
9. Working with other partners, across the public and private sectors and communities will be fundamental to providing a strong local economy and environment which is resilient to the changing climate.

### **Legal Implications**

10. The County Council has a Statutory Duty to deliver numerous wide-ranging services. The delivery of services across the Council can be severely impacted by the changing climate. For example, extreme heat can lead to higher admissions for people needing care. Flood or storm events can prevent or delay care workers accessing properties.
11. Pro-actively identifying opportunities for adapting our services allows for services to prepare for extreme weather events or the general changing climate and for good quality continual delivery of services.

### **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

12. In the Adept publication 'Preparing for Climate Change, Good Practice Guide for Local Government (2019)' it states, "Studies show that adaptation action is generally cheaper, and more effective over time than the costs incurred responding to the impacts".
13. It is anticipated that a dedicated senior officer within each County council Directorate will be nominated as climate change lead with support from the Sustainability team be accountable for monitoring delivery and performance.
14. The authority has committed specific funds in the MTFs to support the climate change agenda with £571,180 committed for 2023/24 and a further £594,030 committed up to 2024/25.

## **Climate Change Implications**

15. The scientific evidence shows that our climate is changing which will inevitably have consequences on our service delivery. To do nothing is not an option if we want to provide a good quality service, safeguard the health and wellbeing of our residents, businesses, and local natural environment.
16. This Strategy provides an overarching framework for local authority Adaptation planning. Adopting the plan will provide a direction for the development of consistent plans across the county and maximise climate change resilience planning by Staffordshire local authorities.

## **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Staffordshire Adaptation Strategy

Community Impact Assessment

## **Contact Details**

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