

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 20 October 2021

Climate Change Annual Report and Climate Action Plan Action Plan 2



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

"The County Council can be proud of the significant positive steps made last year that are highlighted in the annual report. It has set us in the right direction to achieve our net zero target.

"This is our first report since declaring the climate change emergency it and allows us to share our achievements and our plans for the future.

"We still have a lot more to do, and many challenges to overcome if we are to achieve our target. I am confident the work over the last year has set a strong foundation for our net zero journey."

Report Summary:

Tackling Climate Change and becoming a net zero organisation by 2050 is a key priority for Staffordshire County Council and a "green thread" throughout our Strategic Plan, meaning we think climate change in all we do to limit our impact on the planet.

The report feeds back from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on the 7 September 2021 where Members commented on the Council's first Climate Change Annual Report (as required by the approved [Climate Change Strategic Development Framework](#)). The Annual Report records the significant reduction that has been made in the Council's carbon emissions since declaring a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019.

Finally, the report seeks approval of the Climate Change Action Plan 2 (CCAP 2) which contains specific actions to be undertaken by the Council prior to 2025 which will assist in our journey to become net carbon zero by 2050. It should be noted that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at their meeting held on the 7 September 2021, reviewed the draft CCAP 2 and provided valued input to shape the final document.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Note the Council's Climate Change 2021 Annual Report which records the positive progress that has been made on our target to become net carbon zero by 2050.
- b. Note the comments of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at paragraphs 13 to 16, when they considered both the 2021 Annual Report and the draft Climate Change Action Plan 2.
- c. Approve Climate Change Action Plan 2 (CCAP 2) which lists our key climate change mitigating actions over the next 4 years.



Local Members Interest
N/A

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

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Note the Council's Climate Change 2021 Annual Report which records the positive progress that has been made on our target to become net carbon zero by 2050.
- b. Note the comments of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at paragraphs 13 to 16, when they considered both the 2021 Annual Report and the draft Climate Change Action Plan 2.
- c. Approve Climate Change Action Plan 2 (CCAP 2) which lists our key climate change mitigating actions over the next 4 years.

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Reasons for Recommendations:

Background and Progress

1. The Climate Change Action Plan 1 (CCAP 1) containing 22 specific actions was approved and launched at the end of October 2020 and the [Climate Change Strategic Development Framework](#) was approved by Cabinet in February 2021.
2. Strong progress is being made on the 22 specific actions contained in CCAP 1 and it should be noted that some actions have a timeframe of more than one year.
3. A climate change survey of Council staff was carried out in November 2020 and a key theme from the output of the survey was the need to improve general awareness of climate change. A corporate training package has been developed over the last few months and has recently been launched.

4. An internal project group, with officer representatives from all appropriate teams, has been meeting regularly since December 2020 and this group has been used to develop Climate Change Action Plan 2 (CCAP 2). CCAP 2 is envisaged to be a plan which will be current until 2025, although it will be reviewed yearly to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose.
5. The internal project group has also been used to develop a 'greenprint' of how the Council can achieve its ambition to become net carbon zero by 2050. This work will need to be developed further over the coming months but is clear that carbon sequestration will be key to the Council meeting its legal obligations.
6. Work has also been taking place with the District and Borough Councils to see how climate change efforts across the Staffordshire local authority network can be better co-ordinated for maximum impact. Part of this work has been facilitated by Keele University who have, to date, hosted three workshops. The output from the workshops has been presented to a joint meeting of senior members and officers.
7. The County Council recognises it has a wider leadership role to play in collaborating with public and private partners in supporting the county of Staffordshire become net zero.

Annual Climate Change Report

8. The annual climate change report is attached as **Appendix 1**.
9. The report notes a significant reduction in carbon emissions of c12,700 tCo_{2e} from 2018/19 to 2019/20, a reduction of some 25%. This reduction is predominantly as a result of switching to a green energy electricity tariff in the summer of 2019. It should be noted that this significant reduction in annual emissions is unlikely to be replicated going forward and future reporting is likely to show slower progress due to the nature of the challenge before the authority.
10. The report provides an indication of the carbon emissions by area of operation following an audit of the 2019/20 data. The format is consistent with the refresh of the 2018/19 carbon baseline carried out for Climate Change Strategic Development Framework.
11. 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 1.

12. The report provides details on the Climate Change Member Fund that was launched last year. As set out in the report, 116 grants were awarded and lessons are being learnt so that improvements can be made should it be agreed that the fund is run in subsequent years.
13. The Council's first Annual Climate Change Report was reviewed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7 September 2021. The report was welcomed by the Committee and several suggestions were made on how the report could be improved in subsequent years. It is intended that the suggestions made by Committee Members will be considered when the report is reviewed in August 2022.

Climate Change Action Plan 2 (CCAP 2)

14. The CCAP 2 is a corporate action plan owned and delivered by the whole organisation. The Sustainability Team, based in the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills department have a role to co-ordinate and support the delivery of net zero, but it will only be achieved by the whole organisation. As both the annual review and CCAP 2 demonstrate, tackling Climate Change is everyone's responsibility.
15. The draft CCAP 2 was reviewed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7 September 2021. Several observations and comments were made by Committee Members and where appropriate these have been incorporated in the final version of CCAP 2 which is attached as **Appendix 2**. Committee Members, recognised the achievements set out in the 2021 Annual Plan and supported Cabinet's ambition to see this agenda progressed with pace.
16. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members did not suggest any changes or additions to the actions contained in the plan but felt that greater detail should be provided on how success on each of the actions would be measured. It was noted that further detailed information did sit behind the draft plan but that ultimately only one measure mattered and that was the carbon emissions emitted by the Council. It was further noted that the Climate Change Strategic Development Framework sets out that these are to be measured annually and reported publicly. A future Cabinet Paper will set out in more detail the milestones we will measure success against on our journey to net zero by 2050.
17. As mentioned previously CCAP 2 includes actions until 2025 although it is intended that the plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose.
18. It is intended that progress on specific actions contained in the plan will be reviewed and recorded in subsequent climate change annual reports.

This will ensure that progressed is tracked and Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee have asked that the Climate Change Annual Report is presented on a yearly basis along with any intended changes to specific actions contained in CCAP 2.

Timescale

19. The Council has made a commitment to become net carbon zero by 2050. The developing 'greenprint' shows this to be possible, but it is likely to be a major challenge which will require significant carbon sequestration.
20. The actions contained in CCAP 2 will in some cases take longer than one year to fully action, but it is hoped that all will be completed by 2025.
21. It is proposed that the future Climate Change Annual Reports and any changes to the draft CCAP 2 will be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.
22. It is intended the Climate Change Members Action Fund (round 2) will be launched at the Members Autumn Event held to be held on the 8 November 2021.

Legal Implications

23. The Council has a legal obligation to become net carbon zero by 2050.
24. The measures outlined in this report will assist the Council in reaching governments desired aims set out in May 2019.

Risks Identified

25. The task of achieving net carbon zero for the authority by 2050 is going to be challenging and is likely to require significant carbon offsetting. The road map to achieve net zero will be set out in the 'greenprint' which is currently in production.
26. The aim of achieving net carbon zero for Staffordshire is a much bigger task as the Council emits less than 1% of the 6m tonnes of carbon produced in Staffordshire annually. Action on that will need to be co-ordinated at a national, regional and local level if this is to be achieved.
27. Financial provision has been made in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which spans a period of five years. Future iterations of the MTFS will consider any long term financial support requirements. Individual projects (such as sequestration) that require funding will have individual business cases.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

28. Budget provision has been made in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to support climate change activities.
29. The budget available in 2021/22 is being used to support actions in CCAP 1 and will be used to support CCAP 2 activities once approved.

Summary

30. Good progress has been made on the Climate Change agenda since last summer.
31. The 2021 Annual Report outlines the main achievements made and records a significant reduction in the Council's carbon emissions from 2018/19 to 2019/20.
32. The attached CCAP 2 is a considered list of actions which will assist the Council in reaching its ambition to become net carbon zero by 2050. The plan contains activities which will be relevant until 2025 although it is proposed to review annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Climate Change Annual Report (2021)
- Appendix 2 – Climate Change Action Plan 2 (CCAP 2)

Contact Details

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