

Title: Climate Change Action Programme
Lead Officer: Dave Barber (01926 450000)
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ian Shenton
Wards of the District directly affected: All

Summary

This report sets out the draft Climate Change Action Programme (CCAP) which has been developed to work towards the shared Climate Change Ambitions agreed by The Cabinet in July 2021.

Recommendations

- (1) **That the Climate Change Action Programme (comprising the Action Plan (Appendix 1); the Communications and Engagement Strategy (Appendix 3); the Funding Strategy (Appendix 4) be agreed;**
 - (2) **That the Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council carbon baseline (Appendix 2) and Climate Change Action Programme Risk Register (Appendix 5) be noted;**
 - (3) **That the proposals for utilising the Climate Action Fund budget for 2022/23 and 2023/24 to deliver part of the CCAP, as set out in the table at para 1.6, be agreed;**
 - (4) **That a range of funding sources are explored and utilised for the unfunded actions set out on the CCAP, including future Council budget setting processes; and**
 - (5) **Notwithstanding paragraph 1.2 below, that The Cabinet confirms its commitment to the ambition of becoming a net zero carbon Council by 2025 in the event that, for whatever reason, a merger of Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils does not materialise.**
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1 Background/Information

1.1 The Cabinet agreed the following Climate Change ambitions at its meeting on 5 July 2021:

Ambition 1 – Net Zero Carbon Council 2025: ensure the South Warwickshire Council is net zero carbon within a year of its first elections and that services provided through contractors include carbon reduction targets to deliver net zero by 2030.

Ambition 2 – Low Carbon South Warwickshire 2030: to reduce net carbon emissions from across South Warwickshire by a minimum of 55% by 2030 and alongside this, plan how to further reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

Ambition 3 - Adaptation 2050: by 2050 to enable our environment and communities to have adapted to the potential of at least a 3 degrees rise in global temperatures by 2100.

- 1.2 It should be noted that as currently worded Ambition 1 is not intended to infer that either Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) or Warwick District Council (WDC) has already made any commitment to support a merger application. This is a question that will come forward for debate at the Council meetings on 13 December 2021.
- 1.3 This report (along with its Appendices) sets out proposals for progressing towards the achievement those ambitions. The core proposals are set out in **Appendix 1**. This Action Programme incorporates high-level commitments and specific actions which will provide the focus for the next two to three years. The Programme draws on a range of sources including the organisational carbon baselines shown in **Appendix 2**, the Anthesis report, the Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2020 Roadmap Update which was considered by the Climate Change Panel at its meeting in September, the data from the Climate Change Committee's third Climate Risk Assessment (CCRA3) which was also considered at the meeting in September.
- 1.4 In addition to **Appendix 1**, the CCAP, also includes a Communications and Engagement Strategy (**Appendix 3**) and a funding strategy (**Appendix 4**). The Communications and Engagement Strategy draws on the Warwick People's Inquiry which reported in early 2021 and sets out the principles for ensuring effective communications and dialogue with residents and other stakeholders in South Warwickshire. This includes a three-month rolling communications plan. The funding strategy (**Appendix 4**) recognises that the level of spending required to deliver the entire CCAP cannot be accommodated within the budgets of both Councils. It will therefore be necessary to draw on other sources of funding to deliver significant parts of the CCAP. The funding strategy sets out the funding options that will be utilised and links to the funding options in **Appendix 1**. It should be noted that accessing many of these funding streams will require significant work themselves. For instance, applying for grants; developing business cases; establishing a local carbon offsetting fund; and providing evidence to justify Section 106 contributions.
- 1.5 To deliver the CCAP, the proposals include two new joint posts. The Programme Officer will be required to provide capacity to support the Programme Director for Climate Change to monitor and report on progress; develop funding streams; support service in integrating the CCAP in to service plans and projects; to address areas where there are barriers to progress; and to ensure the programme is kept up to date. The Climate Adaptation Project Officer will be required to lead the extensive work planned to deliver Ambition 3. This aspect of the CCAP is less clearly defined and developed than ambitions 1 and 2, but is no less important. It is therefore important that both Councils have the capacity accelerate work in this area, particularly working with a range of partners to refine the data, understand specific climate impacts and develop targeted actions and interventions.
- 1.6 SDC Climate Change Budget: SDC has a budget of £500,000 for Climate Change of which £205,000 is already committed. In conjunction with Warwick District Council's Climate Action Fund, it is proposed to utilise the balance of £295,000 during 2022/23 and 2023/24 to support a number of priorities within the Climate Change Action programme as follows:

	WDC Climate Action Fund (over two years)	Uncommitted SDC Climate Change Budget (over two years)
Ambition 1		
WDC Buildings Heat Decarbonisation Plan	450,000	163,000
EV Charging Infrastructure for Council fleet vehicles	5,000	15,000
Ambition 2:		
eCar Club set up	25,000	
Improved advice and support for landlords and homeowners including targeted service for "Warm Zones"	7,000	7,000
Study in to embodied carbon to inform future policy	20,000	
Complete NZC DPD (already agreed)	20,000	
New House Farm and Solar Farm Project Officer (already agreed)	54,000	
Feasibility study for hydrogen production (already agreed)	44,000	
Resource to prepare hydrogen bid for Government funding	20,000	
Ambition 3		
Climate Adaptation Project Officer	50,000	50,000
Large scale tree planting and biodiversity partnership	200,000	
Other		
Community Engagement and Communications	40,000	20,000
Programme Officer	60,000	40,000
Total	995,000	295,000

- 1.7 There are a significant number of proposals in the CCAP that are currently unfunded. A range of funding sources will be explored for these as set out in the Funding Strategy (**Appendix 4**). This will include funding within the Councils' control (such as CIL); applying for grant funding; and sources that the Councils may be able to leverage through working in partnership with other organisations. The Councils recognise that the level of resources they have currently committed to Climate Change are unlikely to be sufficient, even if alternative sources are utilised. However, it must be recognised that both Councils are currently facing some difficult financial challenges, which involve finding ways to make substantial savings. Any decision to increase spending on climate change must therefore be made in the context of a full understanding of these financial challenges. It is therefore intended that:

- a) Where possible, existing service budgets are utilised in a way that supports climate change and that the service planning processes give this consideration; and
 - b) Future budget setting processes include consideration of the potential to increase the direct climate change budgets where the financial pressures allow.
- 1.8 It should be noted that both SDC and WDC have already utilised funding from within existing service budgets to deliver climate change initiatives. Examples include:
- planning policy budgets for background evidence to support draft low carbon buildings policies;
 - an £18m fund in the 10 year Housing Investment Programme to support retrofit of WDC Council housing;
 - CIL funding to deliver new and improved natural assets and multi modal transport improvements; and
 - CIL funding to support flood alleviation infrastructure.
- 1.9 In addition to the above items, both Councils may wish to fund significant capital projects to deliver renewable or low carbon energy where this may give rise to a source of income that can help with the financial pressures. For instance, the CCAP includes proposals to explore the potential for investing in solar energy, to develop a hydrogen hub and to invest in electric taxi trials. Each of these could involve significant capital costs, however, these schemes also have the potential to deliver income and/or savings. Each of these schemes will therefore be subject to a feasibility study and business case to enable funding decisions to be made.

2 Options available to The Cabinet

- 2.1 The Cabinet could consider whether to include of any alternative commitments/actions in to the CCAP and/or the exclusion of any commitments/actions that are currently proposed.
- 2.2 The Cabinet could consider whether they would recommend any changes to the communications and community engagement strategy or the proposed funding strategy.
- 2.3 The Cabinet could consider whether the spending proposals set out at para 1.6 are appropriate or whether any changes should be made. In particular, the Cabinet could consider whether any of the other proposals set out in the CCAP should be included as alternatives.

3 Consultation and Member's comments

- 3.1 A draft has been considered by an informal Joint Members Working Group comprising three Councillors from each of SDC and WDC. A further draft has been considered by both the Warwick Climate Emergency Programme Advisory Board and the Stratford Climate Change Panel. Comments from these meetings have been incorporated in to the CCAP.
- 3.2 The CCAP has also been influenced by the Warwick People's Inquiry Recommendations and the Stratford Climate Panel's Public Participation meetings in July 2021. Discussions have also been held with officers at Warwickshire County Council (WCC) and with other partners in pulling together to the proposals in the CCAP. Further consultation will take place with key

partners, including WCC, as the proposals are worked up in detail and delivered.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

4.1.1 There are no legal or human rights implications of the proposals

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 The high-level financial implications are set out with the CCAP (**Appendix 1**) and the associated funding strategy (**Appendix 4**). The proposals set out at paragraph 1.6 can be funded from within the agreed Climate Change budgets of each Council. It should be noted, that other than those set out at paragraph 1.6, where there are costs to the Council to deliver proposals within the CCAP these will be subject to future reports setting out the business case and funding requirements.

4.3 Council Plan

4.3.1 The core purpose of these proposals is to respond to the climate emergency. The communications and community engagement strategy recognise the vital role that the District's residents and communities will play in achieving our climate change ambitions. Furthermore, a number of proposals have the potential to enable green economic growth.

4.4 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

4.4.1 The appendices have been prepared to directly respond to the Councils' Climate Change ambitions.

4.5 Analysis of the effects on Equality

4.5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared alongside the development of CCAP proposals. In particular, attention is being given to the impacts of the proposals on low income households who may be at risk of fuel poverty.

4.6 Data Protection

4.6.1 There are no data protection of the proposals

4.7 Health and Wellbeing

4.7.1 The proposals to respond to Ambition 3 reflect the predicted climate changes and weather patterns across south Warwickshire. This includes warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. Both these shifts in weather patterns could have significant impacts on human health and it is therefore vital that the proposals ensure we support adaptation to climate change as a way of minimising negative impacts on health and wellbeing. It is anticipated that we will work closely with health partners including the South Warwickshire Place Partnership, Public Health Warwickshire, the Clinical Commissioning Group and South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust.

5 Risk Assessment

5.1 A separate Programme Risk Register has been developed. This is set out at **Appendix 5**.

6 Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation

- 6.1 This report asks The Cabinet to approve the Climate Change Action Programme, which has been developed to work towards the shared Climate Change Ambitions agreed by The Cabinet in July 2021, along with associated recommendations.

Background papers:

None.