

Title: Climate Change Action Programme Update

Lead Officer: Dave Barber / Tony Perks

**Portfolio Holder/
Lead Member:** Councillor B Fleming

Summary

This report provides an update on the Climate Change Action Programme agreed by the Cabinet in November 2021. In particular, it updates the carbon emissions position; provides detailed progress against planned commitments; updates on the budget and funding strategy; sets out the work carried out on communications and engagement; and provides a review of the risk register.

Recommendation

That Members note progress on the following elements of the Climate Change Action Programme:

- a. **The organisational and District-wide carbon emissions set out at Appendices 1 and 2;**
 - b. **The Climate Change Action Plan update set out at Appendix 3;**
 - c. **The budget and funding strategy update, set out at Appendix 4;**
 - d. **The Climate Change Communications and Engagement Strategy at Appendix 5; and**
 - e. **The review of the risk register set out at Appendix 6.**
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1 Background/Information

- 1.1 **Appendix 1** updates on the Council's carbon emissions baseline as at 31 March 2022 and shows comparisons with the previous three years.
 - 1.2 Whilst the emissions for 2021/22 are substantially higher than 2020/21, it is important to note that the 2020/21 data was significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic and in particular by the closure of offices and other facilities. It is therefore more relevant to compare 2021/22 with 2018/19 and 2019/20. In this context, overall, the data shows 14.3% reduction in carbon emissions since the 2018/19 baseline. This is primarily as a result of reductions in electricity use across a wide range of buildings. However, the following caveats should be noted:
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- 1.2.1 Emissions data from Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) leased vehicles is not yet complete and so it has been assumed that the 2021/22 data is the same as 2020/21. In reality, this is likely to be a relatively small impact.
 - 1.2.2 There may be inaccuracies or inconsistencies in some of the 2018/19 gas and electricity data as this predated the current monitoring and metering system.
 - 1.2.3 Transmission and distribution losses have decreased significantly. However, this is simply as a result of changes to national conversion formulas rather than any specific SDC action.
 - 1.2.4 The 2020/21 data was significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic. In particular, the leisure centres were closed for part of that year and were not fully open for a further period.
 - 1.2.5 The increase in emissions from Neighbourhood Services Buildings in 2020/21 and after is explained by the introduction of a more extensive heating system for the depot, including the warehouse and workshop.
 - 1.2.6 The impact of the newer refuse collection vehicles being operated under the new contract will not be taken into account in the carbon baseline figures until the 2022/23 data has been compiled.
 - 1.3 When looking at Scope 1 and 2 emissions (those directly within the Council's control), it is prudent to ignore the 2018/19 data for the reasons set out in para 1.2.2. However, taking 2019/20 as the baseline, emissions have reduced from 561tCO₂e in 2019/20 to 488tCO₂e in 2021/22. This is a 13% decrease in emissions over two years. Whilst this rate of decrease would not achieve zero carbon by 2025, it should be noted that:
 - a) It is not unreasonable to expect progress to accelerate as longer term planning takes effect. However, this is dependent on ensuring resources are in place to continue to manage the change; and
 - b) To reach net zero carbon, it is possible to offset carbon emissions through carbon sequestration. Whilst this should be seen as a last resort, this should be considered as the 2025 deadline draws closer.
 - 1.4 Scope 3 emissions are more or less at the same level as 2018/19, although they have fluctuated. More than half the Scope 3 carbon emissions arise from contractor vehicles, and in particular refuse collection vehicles. It is expected that there will be a reduction in emissions from this source from 2023 onwards as a result of the new, more efficient vehicle fleet. There is a commitment to further address these emissions by the end of the contract and sooner if possible/viable. Recognising the lead in times for introducing alternative fuels, it is intended to commence discussions with the contractor at an early stage. The other major source of Scope 3 emissions relates to leisure centres. Everyone Active has a commitment to work towards net zero carbon in line with the Council's ambitions and is collaborating on initiatives to invest in carbon reduction measures.
 - 1.5 By focusing on these two sources of emissions, it is expected that the 2030 target for tackling Scope 3 emissions can be achieved.
 - 1.6 **Appendix 2** shows the updated position with regard to District-wide Carbon Emissions based on the SCATTER tool. This uses data predominantly from BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, now the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero), which
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has a significant time lag. Therefore, the most recent data shown is that for 2019, the year this council declared a climate emergency.

- 1.7 **Appendix 3** provides an update on progress for each of the actions within the Climate Change Action Programme. A high level assessment of progress has been carried out for each action and a resulting Red-Amber-Green rating has been applied so that members can see where progress has been on track (green); progress is being made, but not to the extent intended or is not yet due (amber); no progress has been made or significantly slower progress than intended (red).
 - 1.8 **Appendix 4** shows the latest position in relation to the 2022/23 climate change budget along with an update on the various elements of the fund strategy. This shows there has been significant expenditure allocated to climate-related projects from a range of sources, that will directly contribute to the delivery of the three climate change ambitions.
 - 1.9 Spending from the climate change budget has been significantly less than the 2022/23 budget made available. The reasons for this are complex but, to a large degree, this has been down to two factors. Firstly, the changes which followed the decision not to merge with Warwick District Council impacted on the coordination of the budget as the link between the climate change team and the Councils management team was broken. Initially it was hoped that joint arrangements (both political and officer) could be continued for the climate change work and to that end the Programme Director for Climate Change continued to work on behalf of both Councils. However, in practice this arrangement was not fully effective due to different political focuses and the separate organisational management arrangements that each Council put in place. Secondly, the budget underspend has arisen due to the complex nature of many of the climate change projects and initiatives which require a dedicated resource over a significant period of time. These issues are being addressed by the appointment of a new dedicated climate change officer post for SDC. It is hoped that the combination of this dedicated staff resource, along with the opportunity to roll forward the 2022/23 underspend with the 2023/24 budget, will enable progress to be further accelerated in the year ahead.
 - 1.10 **Appendix 5** provides an update on the various communications and engagement activities that have been undertaken to support the delivery of the agreed Communications and Engagement Strategy.
 - 1.11 **Appendix 6** shows the Climate Change Action Programme Risk Register. Despite mitigation, there remain a number of significant risks:
 - 1.11.1 Risk 2: The risk that the cost of achieving the shared ambitions cannot be met within available Council resources – even with the other sources of funding outlined in the funding strategy;
 - 1.11.2 Risk 3: Increasing local impacts from climate change and increasing costs of supporting adaptation – for example the heatwave during the summer of 2022, if regularly repeated this could have significant and costly impacts; and
 - 1.11.3 Risk 5: Lack of staff resources to deliver the Climate Change Action Programme action plan – whilst this is being addressed through the recruitment to a dedicated SDC climate change post, the risk remains high until such time the post is filled and the work is being delivered effectively.
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2 Options available to the Committee

- 2.1 The Committee are invited to comment on progress as set out in the 6 appendices to this report.

3 Evidence Base

- 3.1 The evidence to support this report has been compiled from a number of sources:
- 3.1.1 Appendix 1 has been compiled using data from energy use reports; staff travel claims; fleet vehicle mileage records; and contractor mileage and energy records. Government carbon conversion factors were applied to this data to provide the data.
- 3.1.2 Appendix 2 has been compiled using the nationally recognised SCATTER tool, which is based on a wide range of data from local authorities, governmental organisations, energy companies and regulatory records. This data is analysed at a regional and local level to provide a report on District-wide carbon emissions. Inevitably, there are significant assumptions involved in doing this, but the strength of the tool is that these assumptions are applied nationally.
- 3.1.3 Appendices 3 to 6 have been compiled through an officer review of progress. Feedback has been received from a range of action owners to ensure an up to date position is established.

4 Consultation and Members' comments

- 4.1 There has been no consultation on this report .

5 Implications of the proposal

5.1 *Legal/Human Rights Implications*

- 5.1.1 No implications.

5.2 *Financial*

- 5.2.1 There are no direct financial implications of this report, although members will note the budget and funding strategy update at Appendix 4 and paragraphs 1.8 and 1.9 above.

5.3 *Council Plan*

- 5.3.1 This report is consistent with the Council Plan's priority to respond to the Climate Emergency.

5.4 *Environmental/Climate Change Implications*

- 5.4.1 These proposals seek to maintain momentum around the climate change priority.

5.5 *Analysis of the effects on Equality*

- 5.5.1 There are no direct equality issues associated with this report. However, it should be noted that, as projects are developed, care will need to be taken to ensure that the Council is enabling an effective response to the climate emergency from all geographical areas within the District. Further, it should be noted that changing weather patterns as a result of climate change can often impact socially and economically disadvantaged communities and
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families.

5.6 **Data Protection**

5.6.1 There are no data protection implications related to these proposals.

5.7 **Health and Wellbeing**

5.7.1 No implications.

6 **Risk Assessment**

6.1 The risk register is shown at Appendix 6.

7 **Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation**

7.1 This report provides an update on the Climate Change Action Programme agreed by the Cabinet in November 2021. In particular, it updates the carbon emissions position; provides detailed progress against planned commitments; updates on the budget and funding strategy; sets out the work carried out on communications and engagement; and provides a review of the risk register.

Dave Barber

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Background papers:

Climate Change Action Programme and appendices – see report to Cabinet on 1 November 2021.