

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan

Date: 16 September 2021

Author: Head of Environment

Wards Affected

Borough-wide

Purpose

To update Members on actions and activities surrounding Carbon Management and to seek approval to go out for public consultation on a new Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan.

Key Decision

This is a key decision as the Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.

Recommendation(s)

THAT Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan at Appendix 1 to go out for wider consultation as detailed in this report. Following which the final consulted action plan to be authorised in three months' time.
- 2) Notes the work undertaken to date in relation to the actions and activities surrounding Carbon Management.

1. Background

- 1.1 On 20 November 2019 Gedling Borough Council passed the following motion:

"This Council notes that:

- *The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has found that global warming is likely to reach 1.5C by 2050. The Met Office predicts that the impact of climate change on the UK will include, but is not limited to, flooding of coastal and inland areas, increased demand on energy during hotter summers and colder winters, species loss and extinction, damage to infrastructure that is not equipped for extremes of temperature and an increase in illnesses caused by extremes of temperature;*
- *Parliament and over 200 councils across the country have already declared a climate emergency, recognising the seriousness of the situation and committing to take action in their local area;*
- *Local government has the ability to make an impact at a local level, including greening the council estate, fleet and housing stock by working with housing associations and landlords, as well as working with local industry to help and incentivise them to operate more sustainably. However, local councils have also seen their budgets cut by 60p in every £1 since 2010, which has had a crippling effect on public services and will severely impact the ability of councils to reach their full potential in tackling the causes of climate change;*
- *A recent survey by ComRes has found that 71% of UK adults think that climate change is a more pressing long term issue than Brexit, and 60% of adults feel that the UK government is not doing enough to prioritise the climate crisis;*
- *Co-operatives, community energy companies, local and national campaign groups and charities have already been taking action to tackle climate change, raising public awareness about climate change and environmental issues such as single use plastics and air quality;*
- *Action needs to be taken now in order to minimise the impact and reach of temperature rises and climate change, and that there should be an ambition of carbon neutrality by 2030 at the latest.*

This Council resolves that Gedling Borough Council will:

- *Join with other councils and Parliament in declaring a Climate Emergency;*
- *Set a goal and vision of becoming carbon neutral across Gedling borough by 2030;*
- *Ensure that this work doesn't just focus on the activity of Gedling Borough Council, but also reaches out to partners and residents to help them reduce their carbon footprint;*
- *Produce a practical and robust action plan to ensure that all councillors and officers are clear what Gedling Borough Council will do to tackle the climate emergency;*

- *Work with employers in the borough, including businesses, the third sector, charities and the public sector to encourage them to take steps to reduce their carbon emissions and operate in a more sustainable way, and learn from any best practice that they've already put in place;*
- *Work with local MPs to lobby the Government, as well as Labour's front bench and other major political parties to ensure that local government is given the powers and funding they need to tackle the climate emergency and make our borough greener."*

Actions and Activities Undertaken so far

- 1.2 The Council has been working collaboratively with other Nottinghamshire Local Authorities and the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) on the Climate Emergency Agenda through the Environmental Strategy Working Group, recognising that the energy, climate and sustainability agenda does not respect Local Authority boundaries. This Group meets on a regular basis utilising a workshop approach that is addressing the challenges laid out in the D2N2 LEP Energy Strategy.
- 1.3 This partnership work enables a clear oversight to the work going on across the County, and allows Local Authorities to identify areas of collaboration and joint working, investment and a sharing of resources with workshop themes including:
- Decarbonisation of leisure centres and other energy intensive buildings;
 - Improving the sustainability of existing housing stock;
 - Planning for sustainable new build;
 - Decarbonisation of fleet vehicles;
 - Installation of Electric Vehicle infrastructure;
 - Green procurement and joint investment;
 - Offsetting and investment in green energy.
- 1.4 The Council has already delivered a number of projects and initiatives to reduce the level of carbon it consumes in its buildings, car parks, and by its vehicle fleet. Officers have also looked at the council's planning guidance, and its waste and recycling operations, as well as carbon offsetting initiatives within its parks and open spaces. These are explained in more detail in the draft Carbon Management Strategy.

Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan

- 1.5 As a key priority in the Gedling Plan, the draft Carbon Management Strategy and associated Action Plan sets out the next steps to reduce carbon emission across the Borough as well as the local authority's emissions.

- 1.6 The draft Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan builds on the Council's work to date on low carbon interventions to improve the local environment. It sets out how the Council will reduce its current carbon footprint across the borough, taking into account the fleet vehicle emissions, and the energy used to power and heat offices, leisure centres and other buildings, and encouraging sustainable travel for staff.
- 1.7 Alongside the ambition to reduce its own carbon footprint, the Council will also be playing a key role in working with partners to lead the borough to reach net zero emissions by 2030.
- 1.8 The Council will look to influence, educate and support residents and businesses to reduce their own carbon footprint through powers and activity such as using the planning process to influence how new houses are constructed.
- 1.9 It is important to note that carbon neutral is not the same as zero emissions, and it is expected that by 2030 there will still be some residual emissions from the Council's operations and that a degree of offsetting will be required.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that Members note the summary of ongoing actions and activities already undertaken by the Council so far.
- 2.2 It is proposed that Cabinet approve the draft Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan at Appendix 1 to be published for a period of consultation of four weeks. During the consultation the policy will be available on the Council's website and we will contact partners, stakeholders and community groups to ensure awareness of the consultation across the Borough. Members will note as part of the Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan that a report on the plan will be brought to Cabinet annually.
- 2.3 The Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan will be a live document which will be updated as necessary as it evolves following research and technology advancements. It has been developed to integrate with the overarching D2N2 Energy Strategy to support cross boundary initiatives.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 An alternative option is to not accept the Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan and continue with initiatives on an ad hoc basis. However, this is not recommended as it will not deliver the target of being a carbon neutral borough by 2030. It is considered a sound plan to support our objectives and promote Carbon Management.
- 3.2 A different target date could be set for the Council to achieve carbon neutral status. However, a later date would be out of step with many other local authorities both locally and nationally. Given the scale of the challenge faced, an earlier target date would require a very significant increase in resources which would need to be balanced against the budget pressures to

deliver other corporate priorities.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 It is recognised the action plan will have time scales and costs more accurately set across its 10 year duration and will be subject to proposals coming through the normal budget process on an annual basis.
- 4.2 An initial carbon reduction capital budget of £200,000 has been approved for this purpose, and projects are being funded from this allocation following suitability assessments and detailed business cases. For example Civic Centre Window improvements [400K]
- 4.3 The revenue savings arising from the installation of more energy efficient technology will not be realised until a later date but can be used to part-fund the ongoing carbon reduction measures required to meet carbon neutral status.
- 4.4 Other capital initiatives, such as the Green Homes Grant, are being funded through external grants [720K] successfully achieved in competition with other local authorities. There are also green initiatives [solar panels] built into the Arnold market project.
- 4.5 Other expenditure, such as providing information to residents and businesses, is being paid for from existing revenue budgets.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Achieving carbon neutral status by 2030 is not a legal requirement. However, Council has agreed a motion that establishes an expectation to deliver widespread carbon reductions. This report supports delivery of that expectation.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 As the Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan will be consulted on, this will give the opportunity for consideration of the views of residents and staff to be taken into account.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 This report sets out in detail the carbon reduction / environmental sustainability implications from adopting the Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan. It is a key priority for the Council and the Deputy Leader has been appointed as the Member champion for this purpose. This strategy document will be reviewed by Climate Emergency UK and the results published in a league table on October.

8 Appendices

Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan.

9 Background Papers

None.

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To make progress against the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral across the borough by 2030.
- 10.2 To ensure the views of service users, residents and stakeholders are obtained.
- 10.3 To keep Members updated on the progress of the Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan.

Statutory Officer Approval

Approved by: Chief Financial Officer
Date: 7 September 2021

Approved by: Monitoring Officer
Date: 7 September 2021