



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan – Progress report

Date: 18 December 2014

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Wards Affected

All

Purpose

- To report back to members on progress with delivery of the Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan
- To set out outline plans for the review and update of the Action Plan.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Background

1. Cabinet adopted a Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan in January 2013.
2. The Strategy set out the Council's high level goals and aims for sustainability against five themes, specifically: -
 - Energy
 - Transport
 - Waste
 - Biodiversity
 - Resilience and Behaviour Change
3. Of these, energy was acknowledged to be the central theme around which

other themes would be anchored, given the impact energy has on climate change and adaptation, the need to contribute to future energy security and the wider economic imperatives resulting from increasing energy costs.

4. The strategy also included a series of eight high-level outcome targets, progress towards which is the subject of this report.
5. Attached to the strategy was an Action Plan, setting out a range of actions against the five priority themes.
6. Progress towards these actions is being managed through the Council's established performance management framework and is therefore not covered in detail here. Examples of actions delivered include: -
 - Solar Photo Voltaic panels installed at Richard Herrod Leisure Centre also attracting a 25 year Feed in Tariff
 - LED lighting installed in Arnot Hill House
 - Planning permission granted for a 5.5mW solar farm at Gedling Country Park
 - 63 boilers replaced and installed 15 new heating systems installed in fuel poor households in the borough
 - Voltage optimisation unit installed at the Civic Centre
 - Energy efficient lighting installed as part of upgrade at Bonington Theatre and Arnold Leisure Centre
 - Energy efficient lighting and new pool covers and new boiler installed at Calverton leisure centre
 - The Council's first all-electric vehicle acquired and in use
 - 2 electric vehicle charging points installed at Jubilee House and the new car park in Arnold (former Druids pub site)
 - New staff Travel Plan adopted
 - 51 employees trained in smarter driving techniques
 - Electric lifts installed on 4 bin lorries
 - Maintained recycling levels without further major waste streams
 - Piloted a wood waste collection service
 - Signed up to Climate Local

Summary of Progress and Proposal

7. Progress towards the eight high-level outcome targets is attached at **Appendix A**. All of the targets cover a five-year period.
8. Members will note that good progress is being made in the majority of areas. Targets are being met or exceeded with regard to reduced energy use; reduced carbon emissions from the Council's estate; generation of

- renewable energy; use of more environmentally friendly vehicles and reduced business mileage.
9. Gas and electricity consumption has reduced, contributing to a 3% reduction in carbon emissions from the Council's estate. 9% of the total electricity used by the Council was generated by the solar panel installations at Richard Herrod Leisure Centre; Civic Centre and Jubilee House. This has contributed to an overall cost saving of 3% on electricity, against a backdrop of a 10% electricity price increase.
 10. It has not proved possible to accurately record overall carbon emissions from the Borough and it is proposed that this measure is dropped in favour of a measure to reflect the Borough Council's overall carbon emissions (not just that from its own estate). Changes to the way that domestic renewable energy installations are treated by the planning system mean it has not been possible to gather date against that measure – this measure will therefore be dropped for the future.
 11. Going forward, the broad strategic direction, focusing on energy, continues to be relevant. In the face of reduced resources, it may be appropriate for an even greater focus on the Council's own assets, while continuing to use the Council's influencing powers to encourage wider developments and behaviour change. It is therefore proposed that the remaining outcome targets are retained.
 12. Membership of APSE energy has already allowed for consultancy advice to be secured and may help identify other opportunities going forward. Also, an energy audit has now been agreed for progression and this should identify future opportunities for investment leading to longer-term savings.
 13. In staffing terms, the Sustainability Officer has left the Council and at present the vacancy is being held open, pending investment in other priority areas. However, the importance of the issue continues to be reflected in service areas, which is where the majority of projects are delivered in practice, co-ordinated through the cross-departmental Sustainability Officers' Group. Representation from the new Community Relations service is to be added to the group to help to promote behaviour change and access to financial support, especially in more deprived communities
 14. Some resource to support technical matters has been identified within the Public Protection service, while there remains a strong commitment at Corporate Director level, from where the co-ordination role is currently being delivered. Going forward, it is felt that the these arrangements are likely to be sustainable.

15. Through the Sustainability Officers Group, lead officers in departments have been asked to review current actions in the action plan for their continued relevance and to identify potential new actions for the year ahead to include in Service Plans.
16. Now that sustainability has become more embedded in the work of the Council, it is felt to be appropriate for all work relating to it to be set out in Service Plans and, where appropriate, in the Gedling Plan. This will allow for all aspects of performance to be managed through established performance management mechanisms. High-level performance measures would also be included in the Gedling Plan, rather than in a separate document, and any changes to these would be agreed through annual and quarterly performance monitoring.

Alternative Options

17. Alternative options would include continuing with all of the original measures included in the strategy, but where such measures are now obsolete or excessively resource intensive, such options are discounted.
18. A further option would be to continue with a separate Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan but given that the issue is more embedded, such an option is not recommended.

Financial Implications

19. Funding for the delivery of the strategy and action plan is substantially provided through existing service budgets. Business cases are put forward for any new investment and are recommended for progression where that business case is sound. External funding is sought wherever appropriate.
20. Further capital investment will be required to secure the target for renewable energy generated through the Council's estate, and potentially in other areas. Opportunities are being explored and a business case for investment will be put forward in due course for members' consideration. As outlined above, external funding opportunities and partnership will be sought where appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Progress against Sustainability Strategy targets

Background Papers

Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan – January 2013

Recommendations

Cabinet is **recommended:** -

- To note progress with delivery of the Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan
- To agree that future work on sustainability is encompassed in the Gedling Plan and relevant Service Plans, with any continuing high-level targets incorporated in the Gedling Plan
- To manage future sustainability performance through established performance management mechanisms, with any target changes to be put forward for member consideration through quarterly performance review processes.

Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure that the Council's work on sustainability remains up to date, targeted at priority issues and reflective of resource available.

Appendix A

Summary of Progress against targets

Reduce overall carbon emissions of the Borough by 5% below 2010 levels

This has proved challenging to measure given the variety of potential contributors and the demise of previously used national performance indicator measures and associated support.

Work carried out to assess reductions in the Borough Council's carbon emissions (which includes gas and electricity usage in buildings and use of private cars by staff) suggest a reduction in emissions per capita from 0.024 tonnes to 0.021 tonnes between 2012/13 and 2013/14, though, as noted below, gas and electricity usage data needs to be adjusted to reflect weather conditions to give a more reliable assessment.

It is increasingly unlikely that a reliable measure of overall carbon reduction for the whole Borough can be derived - going forward, it is therefore proposed that the focus of measurement should be on the council's estate and transport functions.

Reduce energy use within Council estate by 8%

Actual energy use in the Council's buildings (including offices, Leisure Centres¹, Jubilee Depot and Community Centres) fell significantly during 2013/14². Electricity consumption fell by 8% during the year, while gas consumption fell by 21%.

However, the established convention when measuring energy consumption used for heating (in our case, gas) is to measure on the basis of "degree days", which takes into account fluctuations in outside air temperatures which clearly impact on the amount of fuel used for heating.

Taking into account these adjustments for weather conditions, the reduction in gas usage results in a 2% reduction. Taken together, the overall reduction in energy usage was 2%, which is on target against the five-year target.

Reduce the overall carbon emissions from the Council estate by 10%

Carbon emissions relate directly to the use of energy and these too fell significantly during 2013/14.

Drawing on the actual reductions in gas and electricity usage above, carbon emissions from the council's estate fell by 145 tonnes in 2013/14, of which 103.6 tonnes was the result of reduced gas usage and 41.3 tonnes from reduced

¹ Joint-use centres at Carlton Forum and Calverton excluded.

² Arnold Leisure Centre was excluded from the calculations for both years given that it was closed for refurbishment for much of the period, to avoid skewing the results.

electricity usage.

However, the same convention applies here as for energy consumption, to take into account varying weather conditions – so when adjusted to take these factors into account, the reduction in carbon emissions equates to 51.3 tonnes. This is a 3% reduction, therefore exceeding the rate required to deliver the five year target.

Generate at least 7.5% renewable energy for use in the Council's estate

Data for this measure is derived from the amount of electricity generated through the solar panel installations at the Civic Centre, Jubilee House and Depot and at Richard Herrod Leisure centre, to date the only renewable energy generation installation on the Council's estate.

All four installations continue to perform well, largely matching projected performance. Together, they have contributed 99,604 kwh of electricity, or 9% of the total electricity used. This represents 1.5% of total energy used, which means this measure is also on target.

The Council continued to benefit from the Feed-In Tariff received for the electricity generated, as well as using that electricity at no cost. The overall cost of electricity used by the Council fell by 3% during the year, at a time when electricity prices rose by 10%. The savings are most marked at the Richard Herrod Centre, where costs fell by 19%.

Increase the number of renewable energy generation installations within the Borough by at least 200 yearly

At the time this measure was identified, it was expected that it would be measured by reference to planning applications for such installations. However, many such measures are classed as permitted development, leaving the Council with no reliable means of measuring progress.

It is therefore proposed that this measure is not continued with for future monitoring. However, it should be stressed that renewable energy in the wider community remains strength within the Borough, most notably with the development of the solar farm at the former Gedling Colliery site.

Reduce the council's business mileage by 5%

Data shows a fall of 3.5% during the year, comfortably achieving the rate required to secure this target over five years. Encouragement to use public transport or other alternatives for appropriate journeys (for example, for business meetings in Nottingham City) continues.

Increase the number of electric and/or hybrid vehicles owned by the Council to at least 5

The Council took delivery of its first all-electric vehicle in 2013/14 to operate

alongside its first hybrid vehicle. The electric vehicle is clearly branded and highly visible when in use.

There were some teething troubles with the charging system, which have now been resolved, and the vehicle is now being evaluated for various uses to inform decisions on future vehicle acquisitions/replacements. Initial driver feedback is positive, though experience also suggests that the Borough's hilly terrain does impact on the range of the vehicle, which is already much less than comparably sized traditional vehicles. A decision on whether allocated funding will be used to purchase a further electric vehicle will be made once this evaluation is completed.

Meanwhile, a range of other vehicle related improvements have been delivered, including the use of electric bin lifts on bin wagons, reducing fuel consumption of these vehicles.

Reduce the amount of waste generated per household in the Borough that goes to landfill from 527 kg to no more than 475 kg

Levels of residual waste (i.e. black bin) rose slightly, from 527 kg per household to 532 kg. Recycling rates have improved slightly and have exceeded 40% for the second ¼ of 2014/15, the first time rates have risen above 40%.

Recent directives from the County Council as the Waste Disposal authority mean that most of the Borough's residual waste is now incinerated for energy rather than landfilled. As such, therefore, this measure is likely to become obsolete. Target recycling and residual waste measures will continue to be managed through the established performance management framework.