

REPORT TO: Council

21 May 2020

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Bridget Smith, Lead Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency

LEAD OFFICER: Trevor Nicoll, Head of Waste and Environment

Zero Carbon Strategy

Executive Summary

1. This report presents the Council's Zero Carbon Strategy.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Council adopt the Zero Carbon Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Zero Carbon Strategy provides an outline of the approach the Council is taking to supporting the transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 in South Cambridgeshire. The development of a zero-carbon strategy for the district was agreed by Full Council on 20 February as an action in the 2020-25 Business Plan.
4. The Zero Carbon Strategy includes targets for carbon reduction and projects for carbon reduction on the Council's own estate and operations, and as such fulfils the commitment made as part of the climate emergency declaration by Full Council on 28 November 2019 to report on these within six months.
5. The Covid-19 crisis has led to a sudden reduction in carbon emission and increased focus on the environment. The Zero Carbon Strategy will support the Council to build on this and deliver a green economic recovery post Covid-19.

Details

Background

6. The Council declared a climate emergency on 28 November 2019 as a result of the motion put by Cllr Pippa Heylings. The motion was passed unanimously and committed the Council to:

- 6.1. Report within 6 months on the carbon reduction targets and projects for the Council's own buildings and operations.
 - 6.2. Ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions by the Council are in line with a shift to zero carbon.
 - 6.3. Ensure that the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan fulfils its role in bringing forward net zero carbon development, particularly in new housing and infrastructure, as well as ensuring that new development can adapt to our changing climate
 - 6.4. Work with partners across the district to deliver this target through investment, skills, strategies and planning; and
 - 6.5. In order to enable South Cambridgeshire and the rest of the UK to reach net zero carbon before 2050, we call on government, industry and regulators to implement the necessary changes with funding, transformed national infrastructure, policy, new technologies and legislation.
7. The Business Plan 2020-25 agreed by Full Council on 20 February includes an action to 'complete a zero-carbon strategy for the district to inform an action plan (quarter 3)'.
 8. The Zero Carbon Strategy was developed in consultation with the chair of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee and considering feedback from a Members' Workshop held on 19 February. It has been supported by the cross-departmental Green to our Core officer group.
 9. The Zero Carbon Strategy is organised into six sections: Homes, Workplaces, Transport, Land & Trees; Recycling & Waste and Energy. The first five sections deal with how carbon emissions can be reduced or sequestered. The final section, Energy, covers how we can help to increase the generation of low carbon energy in the district.
 10. The approach outlined in the Zero Carbon Strategy is one of using our widening circles of influence:
 - Putting our own house in order so we can be an exemplar to others
 - Using our direct influence through policies
 - Making the most of our wider influence

Vision

11. Our vision is to lead the transition to low carbon living in South Cambridgeshire; put our own house in order so it is an example to others and work with partners to encourage the adoption of our own high ambitions at scale; to look at all our work through a green and fair lens, promoting innovative low carbon solutions that also address problems of fuel poverty and lack of access to affordable housing and good public transport; to encourage low carbon energy generation in the district in suitable settings, and be ambitious in our support of new woodland, which will help us double nature as well as reach net zero carbon.

Targets

12. We share with partners and the community the aspiration to deliver a 50% reduction in carbon emissions from the South Cambridgeshire area by 2030 relative to a 2018 baseline, reducing to net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. This target is in line with the

scale of reduction required to keep any global temperature increase below 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures based on the concept of a global carbon budget.

13. For our own estate and operations, over which we have direct control, our target is to deliver a reduction on 2018-19 levels of at least 45% by 2025, and at least 75% by 2030.

14. This includes:

- For our fleet of vehicles, a 50% reduction by 2025, and a 90% reduction by 2030
- For our main office at South Cambridgeshire Hall, a 50% reduction by 2025 and a 75% reduction by 2030

15. Projects to deliver these reductions are referred to in the relevant sections:

- A major retrofit project to South Cambs Hall which will include a solar car port, a ground source heat pump, an LED lighting upgrade, renewal of the building energy management system, improvements to the chiller efficiency and replacement of the air handling unit fan. The work will be delivered through an Energy Performance Contract under which our contractor provides a binding guarantee to achieve the energy savings set out in the proposals. The work will achieve an immediate reduction in carbon emissions of 49%. As the carbon intensity of electricity falls in line with planned government policy, this figure will fall further, resulting in a 75% reduction by 2030 and 90% by 2050.
- The upgrading of our 1,804 streetlamps, (not including those on our Council housing estates), to LEDs, which will reduce their energy requirements by 60-70%, saving significant sums for parish councils, (who pay the bills on these), and reducing carbon by at least 78 tonnes of CO₂ per year.
- Replacement of all our vehicles including our recycling and waste collection vehicles with electric or hydrogen models. We also plan to develop a new solar photovoltaic array at our Waterbeach Depot to provide low carbon power for these vehicles.

16. Targets for reducing emissions from our Housing will be developed based on the findings of a recently completed audit.

Implementation of the Strategy

17. Detailed and costed actions to implement the strategy and deliver the targets for carbon emissions reductions will be developed by each of the Council's Service areas and incorporated into the Council's Business Plan.

18. Progress on these actions will be monitored by the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee and reported to Cabinet at the end of each year.

Options

19. Council can adopt, or not the Zero Carbon Strategy

Implications

20. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial

21. Several of the actions necessary to deliver the Zero Carbon Strategy have already been agreed and budgeted, eg works to South Cambridgeshire Hall, upgrade of street lighting and purchase of an initial electric refuse vehicle.

22. The full cost of delivering the Zero Carbon Strategy will be investigated as part of the development of the action plan. It is currently unclear what effect Covid-19 will have on the Council's budgets and funding for this strategy will be requested via the usual Council budgetary processes which will take account any additional pressures.

Risks/Opportunities

23. A risk register will be included as part of the development of the action plan.

Climate Change

24. The Zero Carbon Strategy will inform the Council's plan of action to mitigate climate change.

Consultation responses

25. The Zero Carbon Strategy has been developed in consultation with the chair of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee and taking into account feedback from a Members' Workshop on the Zero Carbon Strategy held on 19 February.

26. The workshop on the Zero Carbon Strategy was open to all Members and was attended by 16 Members. As well as providing feedback on the proposed approach to the Zero Carbon Strategy, Members also contributed suggestions for Council action to support progress towards net zero emissions in the South Cambridgeshire area. These will be considered in the development of the action plan.

Effect on Council Priority Areas

Being green to our core

27. The Business Plan 2020-25 agreed by Full Council on 20 February includes an action to 'complete a zero-carbon strategy for the district to inform an action plan (quarter 3)'.

Appendices

Appendix A: Zero Carbon Strategy

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