



Full Council

28 June 2021

**Subject: The Council's Carbon Management Plan and draft Sustainability, Climate and Environment Strategy and action plan**

Report by:

Head of Policy, Strategy and Sustainable Environment

Contact Officer:

Head of Policy, Strategy and Sustainable Environment

Purpose / Summary:

To present the Council's Carbon Management Plan and draft Sustainability, Climate and Environment Strategy and action plan for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. That Council accepts the recommendations made on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 by the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees and in doing so approves the Council's Carbon Management Plan and the Sustainability, Climate and Environment Strategy and action plan, for formal adoption.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Policy Strategy and Sustainable Environment in conjunction with the Chairs of The Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees to undertake housekeeping amendments to the Strategy document.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:** The UK Climate Change Act of 2008 was the first piece of legislation to legally mandate a nation to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions - in this case by 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. Many countries have subsequently introduced their own equivalent legislation and in 2015, the Paris Agreement was signed by 197 countries with the aim of limiting “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”. The 2018 Special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the impact of a 1.5°C rise in global temperatures above pre-industrial levels further highlighted the urgency with which GHG emissions must be reduced to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. In May 2019, the UK Government declared a non-legally binding Climate Change Emergency declaration and the Committee on Climate Change recommended a new emissions target for the UK: net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050. This was made a statutory target in June through the Climate Change Act (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.

### **Financial: FIN/7/22/TJB**

The Council has earmarked £500k to support delivery of the Carbon Management Plan, however in addition we will need to develop realistic, viable and affordable funding solutions to deliver this Strategy whilst still continuing to fund our services.

There are a number of options of how this might be achieved as detailed within the Strategy document Resourcing and Finance (page 31-33)

The Council’s Carbon Management Action Plan investment cost is estimated at £6,458k which would equate to £67.50 per head of population.

All projects will be subject of full Business Cases and funding strategies will be developed as appropriate.

The capital programme 2021-22 to 2025-26 includes for £260K of carbon reduction initiatives.

**Staffing:** Staffing and skills requirements to deliver the strategy will be continually reviewed and monitored.

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:** The Council's ambition is to ensure that neither the effects of climate change, nor the costs of reducing emissions, disproportionately affect any residents of the District.

The action plan will reap many co-benefits that have the potential to increase equality and community cohesion. These include improving health and wellbeing through more active travel, improving air quality with reduced vehicle use, increasing social inclusion through community activities and reducing fuel poverty by insulating homes and installing on-site renewable energy.

In practice the actions are too high-level and long term to undertake a meaningful equality assessment on the Council's Strategy and Action Plan. Individual equality assessments will be undertaken as actions are developed.

**Data Protection Implications: None**

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:** The Carbon Management Plan, Climate Strategy and Action Plan contain proposals aimed at reducing the Council's carbon emission to a net-zero position by 2050 and achieve the same across the District of West Lindsey within the same timescale.

The Council's current carbon footprint has been calculated at 3429tCO<sub>2</sub>e and that of the District is calculated at 524ktCO<sub>2</sub>e. These are baseline figures relating to 2019/20 and 2018 respectively. Carbon emissions fluctuate for many reasons, but having accurate baseline data provides a sound starting point of reference against which the impact of subsequent work can be evaluated.

Climate related risks are inherent. The risk of not approving the strategy and its aims and objectives could lead to the Council contributing to irreversible temperature rises and subsequent damage to the climate and natural environments. Additionally, sudden and unexpected changes in global temperatures which result in the forecasts of the IPCC, upon which our work is predicated, being no longer valid, would require an even more urgent response to climate challenges.

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: None**

**Health Implications:** : Health and wellbeing are strongly linked and interwoven into the aims of the strategy as co-benefits of taking positive action to address climate change and enhance the environment and sustainability.

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Update Position on Work to Develop Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy - Council 29th June 2020

**Risk Assessment:**

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**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

## **Executive Summary**

1. This report is presented to Council following a recommendation made on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 at a concurrent meeting of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees. In accepting the recommendation Council is requested to:
  - (a) approve the Carbon Management Plan (CMP) and the Sustainability, Climate and Environment Strategy and action plan for adoption
  - (b) grant delegated authority to the Head of Policy, Strategy and Sustainable Environment, in conjunction with the Chairs of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees, to undertake housekeeping amendments to the Strategy document.
2. A key message of the strategy is that in addressing climate change a number of important co-benefits can accrue. In addition to greenhouse gas reductions, long-term sustainable financial savings; better development; improved health and wellbeing; new technologies and skilled employment; greater community resilience and secure energy supplies can be realised.
3. Alongside the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and its adverse impacts is the biggest issue we face as individuals, communities, organisations and nations. The special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the irreversible impact of a 1.5°C rise in global temperatures above pre-industrial levels and stresses the urgency with which greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.
4. The draft strategy and action plan, supported by a CMP, sets out the Council's response to this challenge. It provides a path way for the Council to follow in order to reach a net-zero carbon position across its own operations and for the wider District to achieve the same position by 2050 at the latest. Not taking immediate action is not an option.
5. The scale of the carbon reduction challenge has been calculated. The Council's most recent carbon footprint has been calculated at 3428 tCO<sub>2</sub>e p.a, with an initial targeted footprint of 2089 tCO<sub>2</sub>e p.a.to be tackled and the Council's current carbon 'hotspots' have been identified. Also the carbon footprint of the whole District is estimated at 524 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e p.a. which signifies that the Council's overall impact is minimal in comparison. However, as a leader of place it is vitally important that the Council brings to bear its influencing skills to support and encourage all stakeholders across the District to also meet the challenge.
6. The key contributory factors to climate change have been identified and are discussed within the strategy. Their identification provides a robust framework against which action can be taken to mitigate their harmful effects.
7. The report sets out the key steps undertaken during the strategy's production. These include work with the Carbon Trust to deliver the CMP; two phases of consultation; training/awareness packages for staff and Members; the production of a communications plan; updates to the website and keeping abreast of the review of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

8. A number of matters remain to be determined. These relate to the overall internal governance arrangements of the work required; how to achieve both District and County-wide collaboration and exert influence and on-going resourcing requirements in terms of officer capacity and skills and finances.
9. In conclusion, the route towards achieving a net-zero carbon position will require a strong level of ambition. However, consultation and feedback have shown that the Council has considerable support from stakeholders across the District.

# **1 Introduction**

1.1 This report presents to Members:

- A brief reminder to Members setting out the original rationale for this work and the approach adopted to undertake the task
- A report produced by the Carbon Trust detailing the Council's revised carbon footprint and an associated carbon reduction action plan.
- The Council's Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy and action plan.
- An outline of the process followed to develop the Strategy.
- Matters for consideration to progress this agenda.

## **2. Background**

2.1 In response to the UK Government's 2019 amendment to its Climate Change Act 2008, whereby it revised its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to achieve a 'net-zero' position by 2050, the Council passed a motion in November 2019 to:

- I. Make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2050, in line with the UK Government's target.
- II. Ask the Prosperous Communities Committee to develop a new strategy on sustainability, climate change and the environment for the Council, with an initial outline being present to the next Annual Council, looking toward achieving the above target.

2.2 Such a strategy was also asked to consider:

- I. Achieving 100% clean energy across the Council's full range of functions by 2040;
- II. How to ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with a shift to zero carbon by 2050, working to ensure that the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan review embraces this approach;
- III. How to support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire area zero carbon within the same timescale;
- IV. Suggestions for budget actions and a measured baseline;
- V. How the Prosperous Communities Committee can consider the impact of climate change and the environment when reviewing Council policies and strategies;

- VI. Any available research (that is expected to be forthcoming) from APSE relevant to this work;
  - VII. Report on the level of investment in the fossil fuel industry that our pensions plan has;
  - VIII. Ensure that all reports in preparation for the 2021/22 budget cycle and investment strategy will take into account the actions the council will take to address this agenda;
  - IX. Call on the UK Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible and ask local MPs to do likewise.
- 2.3 To progress work on this agenda a cross-party Member Working Group, chaired by Cllr Tracey Coulson, was formed and at the Full Council meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020, Members gave consideration to a report which presented an initial scoping document, which allowed for an “interim” update to be provided in respect of work undertaken in progressing the Council resolution to consider environmental and other implications associated with climate change. The report presented set out a strategy development plan, as requested by Council in November 2019 which had been recommended to Council by the Prosperous Communities Committee.
- 2.4 Cllr Coulson, as Chair of the Working Group, presented the report to the meeting and highlighted several key points including, the work undertaken to-date (Section 3 of the report); the interim findings (Section 4 of the report) and arising from this, the proposed way in which the Strategy would be developed: namely by adopting the Ashden toolkit, which would provide a robust framework around which the Strategy could be built.
- 2.5 The report on the whole was welcomed, as was the proposed approach.
- 2.6 Since that time further work has progressed to develop the Council’s Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy. Key facets of this work are set out below.
- 3. Carbon Footprint and Carbon Management**
- 3.1 A reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) to a net-zero position by a certain point in the future is the main driver in tackling climate change. Such a reduction has to be achieved on an individual, local, regional, national and international basis and must include sectoral participation i.e. business, industry, logistics, agriculture, transport etc. Gaining an understanding and baseline of an organisation’s emission levels is crucial therefore to provide a starting point to work from.



- 3.2 It is important to stress that CO2 emissions vary over time as an organisation develops, improves efficiency and/or disposes of/brings new assets into use. External factors play a part also such as the decarbonisation of the electricity supply which in turn reduces the carbon impact of energy usage.
- 3.3 As an organisation, the Council has been working to reduce its CO2e emissions for more than 10 years and has worked through two Carbon Management Plans (CMPs), 2010-2015 and 2016-2021. Delivering against these plans was intended to produce a reduction in emissions of 35% to 1325 tCO2e, based on 2008/09 baseline figures of 2036 tCO2e emitted p.a. Projects implemented to secure such reductions include the installation of solar panels on certain assets (which also produce an income of approx. £21k p.a. to the Council), LED lighting in buildings; voltage optimisation initiatives and more energy efficient replacement ICT infrastructure.
- 3.4 In September 2020, the Council commissioned the Carbon Trust to re-calculate the Council's carbon footprint and produce a Carbon Management Plan (CMP) for the period 2021-2026. The results of this work are set out in Appendix One.
- 3.5 This piece of work is integral in supporting the Council to reduce the carbon impact of its operations to a net-zero position by 2050. It also forms a key element of, and lies within the overall context of, the Council's Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy.
- 3.6 The scope of the work required of the Carbon Trust was to determine emissions relating to:

Scope 1	Org Facilities	Y
	Org Vehicles	Y
Scope 2	Emissions due to purchase electricity, steam, heat, cooling	Y
Scope 3 Upstream	Purchased goods and services	
	Capital Goods	
	Fuel and energy related activities	Y
	Upstream transportation/distribution	
	Waste generated in operations	Y (waste water calculation?)
	Business Travel	Y
	Employee Commuting	Y
	Upstream leased assets	Y
Scope 3 Downstream	Downstream transportation/distribution	
	Processing of sold products	
	Use of sold products	
	End of life treatment of sold products	
	Downstream leased assets	Y – where we are landlord energy usage?
	Franchises	
	Investments	

- 3.7 The Carbon Trust have worked (remotely) with officers to collate data relating to energy and fuel usage, mileages (fleet and officers) and heating systems. Where accurate data is not available, proxies have

been used and certain assumptions have been made from which to calculate carbon emissions.

- 3.8 The year 2019/20 was used to provide a baseline for the Council's carbon footprint. However, to ensure that as many of the Council's operations as possible were captured during this exercise, Lea Fields Crematorium and the Market Rasen Leisure facility were also included, even though in the case of the Crematorium it was not in operation for the whole of 2019/20 and the leisure facility only came on stream last Autumn. Emissions calculations for these facilities were based on profiled energy usage based on one quarter's actual (Crematorium) and building industry standard data (leisure facility).
- 3.9 Taking all factors into account, the Council's carbon footprint has been calculated as 3428tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This figure is greater than that expected upon the completion of the CMP 2016-2021 (as detailed at 3.3 above). This is due to the fact since the inception of that CMP, the Council has built or acquired new assets which contribute to its carbon footprint and the CO<sub>2</sub>e impact of these assets has been included when calculating a new baseline figure. This demonstrates that CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions are not a static phenomenon; they do fluctuate over time.
- 3.10 Scope of emissions: 69% of the footprint is associated with scope 3 emissions from leased buildings, leisure centres, business travel and commuting, water and waste. Scope 1 emissions account for 25% of the overall footprint, whilst scope 2 emissions account for the remaining 6%.
- 3.11 Emissions by activity: Approximately 55% of the measured footprint emissions are associated with electricity and gas use across the council's leased buildings. This includes emissions arising from the Gainsborough and Market Rasen Leisure Centre facilities, which account for 16% of the overall footprint. Fleet fuel consumption is responsible for 26%, whilst electricity and gas use across council operated buildings accounts for 11% of the total footprint. Approximately 8% of emissions are associated with the treatment and disposal of water and waste across council operated sites, alongside emissions from business travel and commuting. The table below illustrates this breakdown:

Scope	Emission Source	tCO <sub>2</sub> e
1	Natural Gas	83.6
1	Other fuels	67.4
1	Fleet	881.1
2	Electricity	241.7
3	Leased Buildings	1339
3	Leisure Centres	530.7
3	Employee Commuting	214.8
3	Business Travel	66.4
3	Water	2.1
3	Waste	1.0
Total Emissions		3428

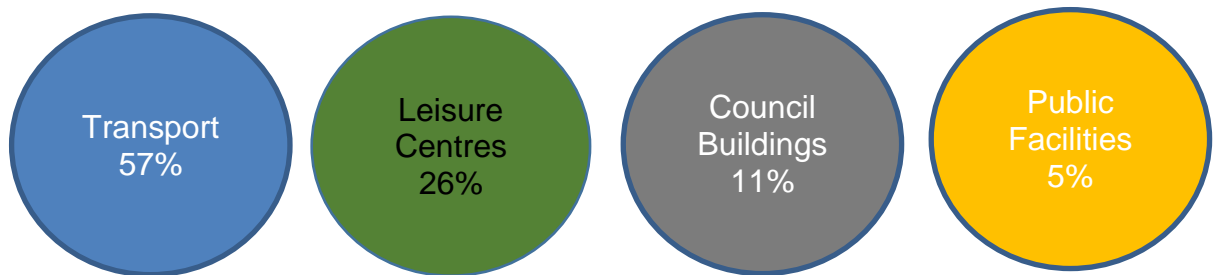
### 3.12 Targeted Footprint

3.12.1 The Carbon Trust have advised that the Council’s initial targeted footprint should exclude those emissions created by leased buildings, which the Council owns but are run by other operators. This accounts for 1339 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and therefore produces an initial net-zero target of 2089 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

3.12.2 The Carbon Trust’s rationale for the exclusion at this stage of emissions related to leased buildings is that, in calculating the emission figures across this estate a series of proxies and estimates had to be used in the absence of actual energy consumption data. The Carbon Trust advise that it is in the Council’s medium-term interests to work with the operators of these buildings to obtain verifiable data, re-calculate a more reliable emission figure across the estate and consider at that point what remedial actions are required to reduce emissions.

### 3.13 Carbon Reduction Opportunities

3.13.1 Four emission ‘hotspots’, accounting for a combined total of 99% of the targeted footprint, have been identified:



3.13.2 Having reviewed existing energy sources, fuel usage data and operational practices and considering existing technologies, the Carbon Trust has produced a summary of recommended actions that the Council should consider to reduce its targeted carbon footprint. The recommendations also carry estimated costs of implementation and expected tCO<sub>2</sub>e reductions, but carry a caveat that actual figures would be subject to robust business case development and the future maturity of technologies. Suggested implementation dates have also been provided.

Emissions hotspot	Project	CAPEX [GBP]	Annual savings [GBP]	Simple payback [yrs.]	Annual savings [tCO <sub>2</sub> e]	CAPEX/ tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Implementation
Transport	Review all travel related policies and ensure alignment with decarbonisation ambitions	Internal costs only	0	Instant	21.09	0	2021
Transport	Incorporate fuel efficient driving into driver training and refresher courses	8,000	10,800	0.8	26.43	303	2022

Transport	Replacement of manager vans with electric vehicles	12,000	3,900	3.1	15.17	791	2025
Transport	Waste and Street Cleansing fleet electrification	6,264,000	17,300	362.5	865.93	7,234	TBC
Leisure Centres	Require third-party operators to implement a formal energy management system, e.g. ISO 50001	Internal costs only	0	Instant	26.54	0	2022
Leisure Centres	Implement requirement for third-party operators to report energy/carbon performance of buildings, at least annually	Internal costs only	0	Instant	10.61	0	2022
Leisure Centres	Compile plant and equipment inventory and work with site operators to implement a replacement schedule based on life cycle analysis	Internal costs only	0	Instant	39.46	0	2022
Leisure Centres	Solar PV at Market Rasen Leisure Centre	18,000	1,912	9.4	5.03	3,576	2028
Council Buildings	Implement a formal energy management system to cover all major energy consuming sites	Internal costs only	1,900	Instant	6.87	0	2022
Council Buildings	Compile HVAC plant inventory and implement a replacement schedule based on life cycle analysis	Internal costs only	2,200	Instant	11.08	0	2021
Council Buildings	Electrification of space heating	TBC	TBC	TBC	83.64	TBC	2035
Public Facilities	LED street lighting	155,900	20,800	7.5	54.82	2,843	2035
Totals		6,457,900	58,812		1,230.03	5,250	

3.13.4 The estimated cost to deliver this plan in its entirety, based on the estimated figures provided, would be £6.458m and would generate on-going savings of almost £59k p.a. The targeted footprint would reduce by 1230 tCO<sub>2</sub>e leaving a residual balance of approximately 859 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to deal with. The costs, which are predominantly in respect of low carbon waste and street cleansing vehicles, are in addition to those already profiled in capital budgets.

3.13.5 In reviewing the recommendations, consideration has been paid to the initial allocation of £500k granted by Council (and reflected in the

MTFP) to support emission reduction projects. Such a sum would enable all of the actions, where costs have been estimated, to be undertaken; bar the de-carbonising of the waste fleet. Timescales are as suggested, but it is recommended that LED street lighting be brought forward, as should explorations related to the electrification of space heating in council buildings and solar PV at Market Rasen Leisure Centre.

3.13.6 Early action to work with the operators of leased buildings to establish more verifiable data relating to emissions from these assets should also be prioritised.

### 3.14 Carbon Offsetting

3.14.1 The residual balance of 859 tCO<sub>2</sub>e referred to at 3.13.4 above, illustrates the difficulty in achieving a truly zero carbon position. Hence decisions would have to be made at the appropriate time as to how best 'net-off', or offset, the 859 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Options currently include tree planting, renewable energy production and carbon storage.

3.14.2 It should be noted that in the hierarchy of carbon reduction methods, offsetting is regarded as relatively expensive per tCO<sub>2</sub>e removed and should be viewed as a last option once all practical means of reducing the amount of carbon produced have been explored.

## 4. Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy

4.1 As set out above, the Council's own carbon reduction efforts sit within the overarching strategy. This ensures that the focus of the strategy is not only on carbon reduction, but also considers wider aspects pertaining to sustainability and the environment and the enabling role the Council must play. Great emphasis is placed on the co-benefits that will accrue from taking action such as improved health and wellbeing; reduced costs; new technologies and skilled employment opportunities.

4.2 The framework agreed and used to develop the strategy covers the following 10 themes set out below. Diagrammatically, this illustrates how the framework complements the Council's Corporate Plan themes of Our People, Our Place, and Our Council.



- 4.3 The strategy in full, forms Appendix Two and sets out the compelling scientific argument for taking positive action; references the (fast-moving) social, political, legislative and policy contexts within which the work has been and will continue to be developed; details the size of the task at hand in terms of setting out the size of the Council's own carbon footprint and that of the wider district (524kt CO<sub>2</sub>e p.a.); provides evidence (in the form of introducing the concept of carbon budgets) to illustrate that urgency is required and concludes with thoughts on how progress will be monitored and reported and that success will be very much dependant on a strong level of ambition and commitment, backed up by significant interventions and investment across the Council.
- 4.4 Within each of the themes, commentary is provided to explain the nature of each of the topics and pointers are provided to illustrate the role they can play in addressing climate change, promoting sustainability and enhancing the environment.
- 4.5 Supporting the strategy is a detailed action plan built around the themes set out above. It acts as a repository for recording ideas and is a working document which will flex over time and will provide a means of recording actions; their progress and success. A summary version of the action plan will act as a front-facing document, used to highlight and publicise live projects. A copy of the summary is set out in Appendix Three.
- 5. Council's Pension Plan**
- 5.1 The motion also requested that the level of investment in the fossil fuel industry that the Council's pensions plan be established.
- 5.2 This information was included in the update report to Prosperous Communities Committee in June 2020, but is repeated here. As at December 2019, pension funds held in holdings classified as "Oil, Gas

and Consumable Fuels” amounted to £20.7m (0.83%) of the total fund value of approximately £2.5bn.

## **6. Supporting Actions**

- 6.1 To arrive at this position a number of supporting tasks have been undertaken. These have contributed to the content of and thinking behind the strategy and the ability to comprehend unfamiliar concepts and theories.
- 6.2 CONSULTATION: Firstly, consultation and engagement. Effective consultation and engagement is a key supporting aspect of strategy development, as it allows initial thoughts and considerations to be shared with interested stakeholders and the receipt of feedback and opinion on the material presented.
- 6.2.1 Under ‘normal’ circumstances a range of consultation methods would be utilised. However, due to Covid19, the Council was restricted to the use of on-line surveys supported by direct messaging to key stakeholder groups (schools, Parish/Town Councils, businesses); updated web-pages showing related content ([www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/climate/](http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/climate/)); media coverage including social media messaging and radio broadcasts; the creation of a dedicated email address ([climate@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:climate@west-lindsey.gov.uk)) to receive associated correspondence; the Members’ bulletin and the Council’s intranet.
- 6.2.2 Two phases of consultation were undertaken. Phase 1, which ran in the summer of 2020 and took the form of a survey, questioned respondents on how important a topic climate change, the environment and sustainability is to them and also asked for feedback on the areas the Council proposed to cover in the Strategy. The survey asked if the scope was wide enough, was targeting the correct areas and for any other relevant thoughts.
- 6.2.3 In summary over 150 responses were received, with the vast majority supportive of the actions the Council was proposing to take.
- 6.2.4 The findings were reflected upon as the Strategy was further developed to the point where Phase 2 consultation was undertaken in December 2020. This again took the form of a web-based survey and used the draft Strategy as a basis for further questioning on matters such as: Is it ambitious enough? Is it achievable? Again direct messages were issued to relevant stakeholders and media communications, including a radio interview were issued, raising awareness of the survey’s purpose and existence.
- 6.2.5 Phase 2 elicited 294 responses and the results show that the issue of climate change does concern respondents to a significant degree. The Council has a strong level of support among respondents for the action it is taking and its ambitions are deemed to be achievable. Points raised which may hinder the Council’s progress related to resourcing, apathy among the public; the difficulty in engineering behavioural and societal change and the degree of collaboration required.

- 6.2.6 Appendix Four offers a summary of both consultation exercises.
- 6.3. **TRAINING & AWARENESS:** Climate change and the associated science is a technical and complex subject, therefore it is important to be able to understand some of the basic concepts and theories that underlie the science.
- 6.3.1 To increase knowledge, both corporately and across Members, a mixed group of 20 individuals (including all members of the Working Group) have partaken in an accredited Climate Literacy Course run by APSE. This took delegates through areas such as the science of climate change; global and local climate change policy; carbon foot printing and planning for change and influencing local stakeholders.
- 6.3.2 Attendees found the material stimulating, thought provoking and it provided a really useful source of information and reference. It has enabled the Working Group to more quickly gain an understanding of some of the key concepts, terminology and science that support the work required to develop the Strategy.
- 6.3.3 It is envisaged that on-going formal training for a wider cohort of staff and Members will become a feature of both staff and Member development packages.
- 6.3.4 In addition to training, engagement exercises based around a number of staff workshops and Member facing presentations have been held. In total approximately 50 individuals have taken part across these cohorts. The purpose has been to set the policy context for the development of the Strategy, highlight the science that points to the need for urgent climate action to be taken; detail activities the Council has undertaken to date and what actions are to be completed. Sessions for both staff and Members have been well received and for some, provided a useful starting point in respect of this subject matter. Again, on-going updates and awareness raising packages are planned for staff and Members alike.
- 6.3.5 External awareness and engagement packages have been difficult to arrange under the prevailing circumstances. One Parish Council has been in contact and a constrictive discussion took place. It is intended that use will be made of the principles within the refreshed Parish Charter and use this vehicle as a means of holding session(s) with Parish and Town Councils across the District to inform, facilitate discussion and develop networks. The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021. The summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This will provide an excellent backdrop for the Council's engagement plans.
- 6.4 **COMMUNICATIONS:** a significant amount of time has been spent on ensuring that communication messages related to this work are as effective as possible. Clear, consistent messaging, delivered to the



appropriate stakeholder(s), via the most appropriate means, at the most appropriate times is essential. The aims therefore of the Communications Plan have been determined as thus:

- Raise awareness and engagement of sustainability, climate change and the environment
- Demonstrate the agenda is real
- Facilitate change
- Engage hard to reach groups (under 40's)
- Develop a significant programme for the climate change initiative; including businesses, schools and residents. Press coverage and events; creating content for officers to deliver

6.4.1 The key messages which form the bedrock of the communications strategy, which must be stressed by officers and Members alike, at all opportunities are:

- Science demonstrates that urgent and radical action is needed to avert severe and widespread environmental, social and economic disaster
- Action on climate change is required to support the most vulnerable in society
- Emphasising the co-benefits of delivering the Strategy i.e. investment, employment, economic recovery, social and well-being related benefits
- The green agenda is relevant to us all
- Every small step can have a big impact on our environment

## **7. Current Considerations**

7.1 At this moment in time the Council is nearing the 'end of the beginning' of its work to address climate related matters within the Council and across the wider district. Attention has therefore been paid as to what will be required to ensure the achievement of the Council's ambitions can be attained and reported.

### **7.2 Oversight of Delivery**

7.2.1 From an internal perspective, mechanisms are required to ensure the effective oversight and delivery of the action plan, to assess, appraise and oversee implementation of new related projects and initiatives and to ensure that climate, sustainability and environmental related concerns are hard-wired into Council decision making and wider corporate activity such as procurement decisions, risk management, business planning, financial planning, programme/project management and performance management.

7.2.2 To achieve this, it is intended that an internal board is formed to take responsibility and have oversight of all related activity. Membership will be drawn from relevant officers from across the Council and will also have senior officer representation.

- 7.2.3 The Council's performance management systems will be used to monitor and report on progress. Suitable measures will be determined (qualitative and quantitative). The Council's robust programme and project management methodology will provide a framework to ensure that business case development, project development, delivery and outcomes monitoring are routinely undertaken.
- 7.2.4 Also, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function may have a key role to play in examining proposals, tracking the delivery of projects and the realisation of expected benefits and overseeing delivery of the CMP action plan and other associated performance management.
- 7.3 District-Wide Leadership
- 7.3.1 Looking towards the wider-district, the Council's role is to facilitate, encourage, co-ordinate; acting as a fulcrum bringing together organisations from the business, voluntary, government and educational sectors from across the District to participate in meaningful discussion and activity. Working at scale; identifying mutually beneficial initiatives; forming an effective lobbying, campaigning and influencing alliance and feeding into county-wide structures would be more achievable via the formation of a district-wide grouping and provide a strong collective voice. Initial thoughts are that the Place Board may be a suitable structure for this and developments will progress from this starting point.
- 7.3.2 Consideration also needs to be paid as to how the District's interests are represented and considered on a county-wide basis. LCC has adopted its own Green Masterplan which it will be progressing and therefore it is vital that their actions and intentions and ours, are complementary. The outcome of the review of the CLLP, which has considered how it can contribute to the achievement of a net-zero carbon position, will provide a strong policy framework from which to work.
- 7.4 Resources
- 7.4.1 To deliver the action plan, consideration needs to be paid to resources, in both financial and officer capacity/capability terms. However, one of the main considerations in respect of finances is that, often investing in climate related initiatives at an early stage can reduce futures costs and/or generate additional income. Hence, the financial aspect of business cases must explore all possibilities and set out viable costed options and associated payback considerations. Members will have noted the estimated costs to implement the CMP as calculated by the Carbon Trust. These are undoubtedly significant and need to be considered and prioritised on an investment v carbon reduction basis.
- 7.4.2 An initial sum of £500k has been agreed by Members to support the delivery of the strategy's aims. This was agreed by Council and is set out in the MTFP. This is a considerable amount of money and signifies the seriousness with which the Council is taking the subject. Such a

commitment will no doubt be beneficial in attracting further external funding as and when opportunities arise.

7.4.3 The strategy explores various possible means of resourcing the action plan. Working closely with finance colleagues, keeping abreast of opportunities and new funding streams and innovative funding arrangements will be an on-going process.

7.4.4 Staff resources pertaining to capacity and capability are also to be considered. An immediate action has been the creation of, and appointment to, the role of Head of Policy, Strategy and Sustainable Environment. However, as detailed, the breadth of work is broad and in some cases very deep. The subject matter is fast-moving with regular policy, technology and initiative announcements to keep abreast of. It can also be technical and complex, requiring a high level of understanding of key terms and concepts and an ability to transfer the theory and apply it to the context of the organisation; thereby ensuring that climate related considerations are accurately reflected and reported and decision-making processes fully contain related information.

7.4.5 The on-going training and awareness packages on sustainability, climate and environment issues for staff and Members will play a key role in increasing general knowledge. But while awareness and understanding of the subject matter has increased among a small cohort of enthusiastic officers over the past year or so, the Council does not currently possess any real technical expertise. Options will have to be explored as to how best remedy this and provide capacity alongside the Head of Policy, Strategy and Sustainable Environment, for the action plan to gain traction. Potential solutions include:

- The recruitment of relevantly qualified staff and/or the commitment to support any current staff member(s) who may be interested in obtaining professional accreditation in the subject matter.
- Secure expert/technical support on a retained contract(s) to draw on at appropriate times for project development and delivery. Progress on this as a solution is underway.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1 The production of this strategy and action plan has involved considerable work across many topic areas. However, it has led to the Council being in a position where it has met the requirements of the Council motion made in November 2019 and is now fully appraised of its own climate reduction challenge and responsibilities and also of the issues facing the wider District. The strategy provides a roadmap to achieving a net zero carbon position across both Council operations and on a district wide basis. Input into the development of the strategy from interested parties via two consultation exercises has to a large extent validated the Council's intent and shows that there is a high level of support. It is imperative therefore that progress is consistent,

transparent and evaluated to ensure actions taken are meeting their intended objectives on an on-going basis.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 1.** That Council accepts the recommendations made on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 by the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees and in doing so approves the Council's Carbon Management Plan and the Sustainability, Climate and Environment Strategy and action plan, for formal adoption.
- 2.** That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Policy Strategy and Sustainable Environment, in conjunction with the Chairs of The Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees, to undertake housekeeping amendments to the Strategy document.