

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel

8 November 2021

TITLE:	SMDC Draft Climate Change Part 2 Plan
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Joe Porter - Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity
CONTACT OFFICER:	David Smith - Head of Communities and Climate Change
WARDS INVOLVED:	(All Wards);

Appendices Attached – Appendix A: Working Group Recommendations; Appendix B: SCATTER Emissions Baseline; Appendix C: Climate Attitude Survey Results; Appendix D: Climate Change Strategy 2021 – 2030;

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The report presents the Council's approach to tackling the climate change emergency.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel recommend that the Cabinet approve the Climate Change Strategy 2021 – 2030.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council recognises the global climate emergency and is committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.
- 3.2 The District Council cannot solve the problem on its own, but can take a lead role in the district and use its powers and influence to support wider local action to reduce emissions and prepare for a changing climate.
- 3.3 The national Climate Change Committee estimate that local authorities¹ have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas and are believed to be responsible for between 2 and 5% of local

¹ This refers to Staffordshire County Council and the Peak District National Park Authority as well as the District Council.

emissions. The Committee recognised that more than half of the cut in emissions required to meet national reduction targets rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions.

- 3.4 When developing its plan for reducing district-wide emissions, the Council drew upon three main sources of information: Information gathered by Working Groups, Data Analysis and a Climate Change Attitude Survey.
- 3.5 The plan, which can be found at Appendix D, is intended to provide a clear vision and strategy for achieving net zero emissions from the district by 2030.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 This is a key action towards delivering Aim 4 of the Corporate Plan. It also supports the Council's action in delivering a Climate Change Emergency.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 None identified.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

None

6.2 Workforce

The Council is recruiting a Climate Change and Biodiversity Officer to play a lead role in delivering the Climate Change Strategy. However, all Services will be involved in delivering Pt 1 and 2 of our climate change plans.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

The plan includes a commitment to give priority in responding to climate change to the needs of vulnerable groups who are most at risk to the adverse effects of climate change, including food and fuel poverty, and lack of access to green space.

6.4 Financial Considerations

The Council carries an earmarked reserve set aside for initiatives responding to the Climate Emergency. This reserve is available to provide the funding for unbudgeted in-year spend developing projects designed to further the Council's ambitions around climate change. Once specific projects have been developed (and their

business case signed off); the necessary budget requirements can be incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan.

6.5 Legal

None – the Council does not have a specific statutory duty to tackle climate change

6.6 Climate Change

The strategy is central to the Council's response to tackling climate change in the district.

6.7 Consultation

The Council developed a Climate Change Sub-Committee and Working groups to inform the development of the plan. In addition, the Council commissioned a Climate Change Attitude survey that was carried out in September 2021.

The Council has commissioned Anthesis to carry out a series of workshops over the coming groups to continue the consultation and is developing a Communications and Engagement Strategy.

6.8 Risk Assessment

The Council has set a various challenging target of achieving Net Zero by 2030. Local authorities (which includes the District Council, County Council and Peak District National park authority) have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas and are believed to be responsible for between 2 and 5% of local emissions. The Council recognises that it will require all stakeholders to work together the achieve the 2030 target.

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

Web Links and Background Papers

Part 1 Action Plan available at
<https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/ClimateChange>”

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7. Detail

Introduction

- 7.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council recognises the global climate emergency and is committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.
- 7.2 The District Council cannot solve the problem on its own, but can take a lead role in the district and use its powers and influence to support wider local action to reduce emissions and prepare for a changing climate.
- 7.3 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council declared a climate emergency on 10th July 2019 and agreed to work with partners across the district and beyond to make Staffordshire Moorlands carbon neutral by 2030. The Council recognises that it will be difficult to achieve such an ambitious target but believes that the target needs to be challenging to encourage the action that is needed to tackle the climate change emergency.
- 7.4 The Council subsequently approved a new corporate plan (2019-23) on 8 October 2019 that included an aim to: “*Protect and improve the environment and respond to the climate emergency*”. The Council’s corporate plan has previously included aims around improving the environment, but this is the first time that climate change has been specifically named as a key aim demonstrating the Council’s commitment to putting climate change at the heart of its activities.
- 7.5 The Council divided its action planning process into two phases. The first phase focussed on reducing the emissions generated by the Council whilst delivering its functions. The Council approved an action plan describing for reducing these emissions on 29 June 2021.
- 7.6 This report presents the second part of its Climate Change Plan, which looks beyond those emissions directly related to District Council activities and provides a plan for reducing emissions across the district.

Reducing District Emissions

- 7.7 The national Climate Change Committee estimate that local authorities² have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas and are believed to be responsible for between 2 and 5% of local emissions. The Committee recognised that more than half of the cut in emissions required to meet national reduction targets rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions. The Committee also helpfully set out the different methods that local authorities can use to control and influence emissions and tackle climate change:

² This refers to Staffordshire County Council and the Peak District National Park Authority as well as the District Council.

- **Direct Control:** the Council's own buildings, operations, travel
- **Procurement and commissioning & commercialisation**
- **Place shaping:** using powers to control development and transport (transport is a County Council function along with things like highways and education)
- **Showcasing:** innovating, piloting, demonstrating and sharing good practice, scaling and replicating
- **Partnerships:** leading, bringing people and organisations together, co-ordinating and supporting others, joining others' partnerships
- **Involving, Engaging and Communicating:** translating global & national climate change targets for local relevance; with stakeholders to raise awareness, involving people and ideas for local solutions.

7.8 When developing its plan for reducing district-wide emissions, the Council drew upon three main sources of information: Information gathered by Working Groups, Data Analysis and a Climate Change Attitude Survey.

7.9 **Council Working Groups.** The declaration of a climate emergency included an undertaking to:

“Request that the Chair of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel establishes a sub committee to undertake detailed research into the effects of climate change in the District, to include consideration of all relevant data and monitoring information available, and to involve evidence from relevant stakeholders, with a view to recommending to the Council an effective, achievable and costed plan of actions to address climate change within the Staffordshire Moorlands”.

7.10 The Council went beyond this undertaking and also established working groups to look at district greenhouse gas emissions from Council activity, travel and transport, housing, industry, agriculture, land use and biodiversity, waste, and energy production. These working groups gathered evidence from many outside agencies and experts to identify actions that could reduce emissions.

7.11 The working groups were asked to conclude their work and submit their recommendations via the Council's Democratic Services team by 15th October 2021. A copy of the submissions received can be found at Appendix A.

7.12 **Data analysis.** Anthesis UK Ltd were asked to prepare a Scatter emissions baseline for the district. A copy of this report is available at Appendix B.

7.13 The report reveals that in 2018, Staffordshire Moorlands' in-boundary emissions totalled 905 ktCO₂e. The majority resulted from buildings (61%), on-road transport (19%) and livestock (22%).

7.14 The report also identifies that an annual reduction rate of 12.4% is needed to keep Staffordshire Moorlands aligned with Paris Agreement targets. However, according to BEIS statistics, the average annual emissions reduction rate in Staffordshire Moorlands between 2005 and 2019 was just over 2%. This

means that if the district continues along a business-as-usual scenario, the carbon budget (2020 –2100) will be exceeded by 2027.

7.15 Climate Change Attitude Survey. The Council commissioned Future Focus Research to carry out 500 telephone interviews with the general public between 6 and 26 September 2021. A copy of the results can be found at Appendix C. In summary the survey revealed that:

- 86% of residents are either very or a little concerned about the impact of climate change of the district, while 13% are not concerned at all.
- Of most concern are:
 - loss of animals, plants, habitats and biodiversity (93%)
 - extreme weather (91%)
 - environment destruction (90% very or a little concerned)
- 58% of residents understand either very well or quite well what is meant by Net Zero.
- 29% feel that it is achievable to become Net Zero by 2030. However, 25% said it isn't achievable and 46% do not know if it's achievable.
- 86% said that climate change is either somewhat, very or extremely important to them.
- When asked what would help them to make changes to tackle climate change the most popular responses are is more information (45%) and advice (45%) followed by financial help and incentives (39%).
- All areas are considered to be important to prioritise by the vast majority of residents:
 - reduce waste and improving the use of resources (96% very or quite important),
 - the way we use our land, where we build and we build (96%)
 - the emissions from industry and agriculture (96%)
 - how we heat, power and build our homes (96%)
 - the way we use energy (94%)
 - the way we travel and how goods are transported (93%)
 - how we improve and maintain our gardens, parks, countryside and the natural environment (92%)
- The most important actions to tackling climate change are considered to be encouraging the reuse, repurposing and recycling of waste materials (98% very or quite important), followed minimising single use plastic in packaging or products (97%). Of least important is increasing the use of electric vehicles (80% important).

The Plan

7.16 The plan, which can be found at Appendix D, is intended to provide a clear vision and strategy for achieving net zero emissions from the district by 2030.

Our Vision: Staffordshire Moorlands will become carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account emissions from both production and consumption

Our Mission: Encouraging people, businesses and other organisations to do what they can to reduce their carbon footprint and making it easier, where we can, for those changes to happen.

Our Strategy: We will use our tools, levers and powers and apply the Carbon Management Hierarchy as we focus on our 7 Ways to Net Zero; applying our values and seeking opportunities to deliver co-benefits.

7.17 The Carbon hierarchy recognises that some actions are better than others in terms of producing more lasting reductions in emissions. Our plan considers ways of avoiding emissions before thinking about ways of removing emissions or offsetting them.

7.18 The 7 Ways to Net Zero is the local framework that we have developed to provide a structured response to reducing carbon emissions. It encourages us to consider actions under 7 main headings:

- The Way We Live
- The Way We Travel
- The Way We Work
- The Way We Make Energy
- The Way We Look After Our Environment
- The Way We Manage Waste, and
- The Way We Can Help Change to Occur.

7.19 The plan also sets out the values that we will adopt when delivering our plan. This includes following the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and committing to:

- put inclusive climate action at the centre of our decision-making to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone; and
- inviting our partners – political, business and community leaders; statutory organisations; trade unions; civic society and community members – to join us in recognising the global climate emergency and help us deliver on science-based action to overcome it.

Next Steps

7.20 It is inevitable that our actions and approach will change over the time as we grow to understand more about addressing climate change and in response to legislative changes and funding opportunities. The plan is designed to provide a framework for responding to such opportunities and emerging threats:

7.21 We have identified several actions that need to take place over the next 12 months:

- Further develop our approach to target setting including milestones for action.
- Recruit a Climate Change Officer
- Enhance our monitoring procedures to make sure that the actions that we are taking are having an impact
- Embed Climate Change activity within the Council's annual budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

- Include mandatory Carbon Literacy/Awareness training for all new Council employees and become a Carbon Literate organisation.
- Analyse the Council's procurement emissions (due December 2021)¹
- Prepare a land and rural emissions profile (due December 2021)
- Conduct a district-wide pathway analysis (due December 2021)¹
- Prepare and deliver a Communications and Engagement Plan.

7.22 We began delivering our communications plan in the run-up to COP26 and we will continue with this delivery during COP26 and afterwards. This will include publishing a plain English summary of the approved Part 2 plan in January 2022 along with a request for people who live, work or learn in the district to commit to one or more pledges to reduce their carbon footprint.

7.23 Our engagement activity will also begin during COP 26 with a series of events. Activities include an affordable warmth webinar arranged with Beat the Cold; an Air Aware Roadshow in collaboration with Staffordshire County Council, litter picks and general tidy ups and mindfulness walks

7.24 This activity will be followed swiftly by a series of on-line workshops, delivered by Anthesis, to present the findings of their research and develop ideas for further action that can be incorporated into the next refresh of our action plan. Arrangements for these workshops are currently being finalised with Anthesis but the draft programme is provided below:

Session	Attendees	Theme	Date	Session length
1	Council officers	All sectors	Nov/Dec 19	3 hours
2	Councillors	All sectors	Dec 19/Jan 20	2 hours
3	Residents, Community and Youth Groups	Buildings Transport Waste Energy Supply	Jan 20	2 hours
4	Businesses & private services	All sectors	Jan 20	2 hours