

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

**11 July 2022**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>SMDC Climate Change Update</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Joe Porter - Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>David Smith - Head of Communities and Climate Change</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>(All Wards);</b>

**Appendices Attached –**

**1 Climate Change Plan Annual Report**

**2 Agricultural and Land Use Analysis Report**

**1. Reason for the Report**

1.1 To update Members on the progress towards meeting the Council's Climate Change targets and to provide detail of next steps.

**2. Recommendation**

2.1 That Members note the content of the report.

**3. Executive Summary**

3.1 Following declaring a climate emergency in July 2019, the Council has developed action plans to deliver an ambition for the district to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The final part of the plan was agreed in December 2021. This set out an approach following seven strategic themes. This Annual Report is to communication the development so far and future steps to achieve the ambitions.

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

4.1 Corporate Priority 4 'Protect and improve the environment and respond to the climate emergency'

## 5. **Alternative Options**

5.1 None identified

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

None

### 6.2 Workforce

None

### 6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

None

### 6.4 Financial Considerations

Actions are delivered through existing budgets or via an earmarked reserve as appropriate.

### 6.5 Legal

None

### 6.6 Climate Change

This report demonstrates with Council's actions and commitments to tackling the climate and nature crises.

### 6.7 Consultation

None

### 6.8 Risk Assessment

None

Neil Rodgers  
**Executive Director (Place)**

## **Web Links and Background Papers**

<https://democracy.highpeak.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=1363&Ver=4>

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## **Contact details**

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<https://democracy.highpeak.gov.uk/documents/s26401/SMDCDraftClimateChangePart2Plan.pdf>

<https://democracy.highpeak.gov.uk/documents/s23973/ClimateChangeActionPlanReport.pdf>

[Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Climate Change Strategy](#)

[What We Can Do](#)

<https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/scoring/district/>

[Environment Act 2021](#)

## 7. Detail

- 7.1 On 10th July 2019, the Council was asked to consider a motion for the Council to declare a Climate Emergency, which included a commitment to working with partners towards making Staffordshire Moorlands reach Net Zero by 2030. The motion was carried unanimously.
- 7.2 The Council subsequently approved a new corporate plan (2019-23) on 16 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 was the first time that climate change had been specifically named as a key aim demonstrating the Council’s commitment to putting climate change at the heart of its activities.
- 7.3 The Council has a large degree of control over the emissions generated as a consequence of delivering its functions but, together with the County Council, has power or influence over only roughly a third of emissions across the district. The Council’s action planning process was thus divided into two phases:
- Part 1 - reducing the emissions generated by the Council whilst delivering its functions (approved 29 June 2021).
  - Part 2 - reducing emissions across the district (approved 7<sup>h</sup> December 2021).
- 7.4 Together, the Part 1 and Part 2 present the Council’s strategy for tackling the climate change crisis (a further strategy detailing how the Council intends to tackle the associated nature crisis will be brought forward in 2022/23).
- 7.5 The Council’s strategy involves focussing on seven areas, which we have called our 7 Ways to Net Zero. These are:

1 The Way We Live	2 The Way We Travel	3 The Way We Work	4 The Way We Make Energy	5 The Way We Look After Our Environment	6 The Way We Manage Waste	7 The Way We Can Help Change to Occur
Actions						
Support new buildings to be energy efficient and minimise emissions	Reduce emissions from Council vehicles	Reduce emissions from Council buildings	Look at generating green energy for Council buildings	Increase tree cover and improve nature	Reduce carbon emissions from our waste and recycling service	Consider Climate Change in all Council decisions and policies
Tackle fuel poverty and reduce emissions from homes	Support sustainable travel and development	Switch to green energy	Promote the use of renewable energy	Protect and extend the existing green infrastructure	Encourage recycling and the green initiatives	Provide Councillors and staff members with appropriate skills and training
	Support the increased use of EV vehicles	Buy low carbon products and services		Reduce the risk from flooding	Support community initiatives designed to reduce, recycle and repurpose waste	Promote climate change projects
	Encourage people to make journeys by walking or cycling	Support the green economy		Work in partnership with our communities, including the most vulnerable		Encourage community climate change and nature projects
		Support the development of a circular economy				Work with Parish Councils
		Help businesses to get advice and support				Involve and engage our communities and create a more inclusive society
		Encourage Council staff to adopt energy saving/low carbon				Lobby for change

- 7.6 We have produced a short video to explain the strategy: [Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Climate Change Strategy](#)
- 7.6 Climate Emergency UK assessed all Councils' climate change plans according to 28 questions across nine sections, based on the expert-approved checklist. Each council was marked against the checklist criteria and given a right to reply before the scores underwent a final audit. This work was completed between June and December 2021. Staffordshire Moorlands' plan was given a score of 87% making it the second highest scoring plan by a district council in the country.
- 7.7 The Council's approach to climate change was also considered as part of the LGA's corporate peer challenge process in January 2022. The peer challenge was delivered by a team of experienced elected member and senior officer peers who made the following observations:
- Commitments that the councils have made to achieve Net Zero by 2030 are ambitious, especially in a context of this not just relating to the councils' own impacts and footprints but also across the geographies as a whole. Strong political leadership will be important in driving the agenda forward if these ambitions are to be fulfilled.
  - Investment is being made in the climate change agenda, particularly in the form of recruitment of additional and expert capacity. This is being viewed positively across the councils but there is a sense of people waiting for the injection of this capacity when the reality of what is required is ownership right through both organisations of the climate change ambitions and related delivery.
  - To deliver on the commitments and expectations, climate change and sustainability need to be corporately owned and driven.

- The over-arching and very clear message that has come through our discussions around climate change is that people now want to see action. In that context, we would encourage the councils to communicate the progress being made against the action plans in order to build confidence.

7.8 An action plan, which has been reviewed by the peer team, has been developed and the actions incorporated into the Council's on-going action plan.

### *Achievements*

7.9 Key activities:

- Introduction of Moorlands Green Network, Parish Council Climate Change Forum, developing a youth engagement strategy.
- Climate Change Fund
- Established a Climate Change and Biodiversity Delivery Group
- Employed a dedicated Climate Change and Biodiversity Officer, shared across the Alliance.
- Planted 22 community orchards.
- Trialled and subsequently introduced using waste hydrogenated vegetable oil in Council fleet vehicles.
- Trained Heads of Service and Climate Champions in Carbon Literacy, resulting in Bronze Carbon Literacy accreditation for the Council.
- Completed energy and water reviews of all Council buildings to identify improvements to performance

### Next Steps

- Revised performance monitoring framework (November 2022)
- Engagement and Communications Strategy to build upon existing work highlighted under achievements (November 2022)
- Updated action plan with greater specificity of detail and timescales (November 2022)
- Developing a Plan for Nature (biodiversity strategy) with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (this will incorporate the Council's response to the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements under Part 6 of the Environment Act 2021, which is likely to be mandatory by November 2023 subject to further guidance)
- Work with the County Council on Electric Vehicle Strategy.
- Implement energy saving recommendations into capital and maintenance programmes.