



Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Climate Change Annual Report

July 2022

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council declared a [Climate Emergency](#) in July 2019.

Terms of Reference of that declaration were that this Council declare a Climate Emergency as many councils have already done all over the UK and will undertake to:

- 1 Start working with partners across the district and region towards making the Staffordshire Moorlands carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account emissions from both production and consumption.
- 2 Call on the Government to provide guidance, powers and resources to make carbon neutrality possible by writing to local MPs and all relevant government departments.
- 3 Requests that the Chair of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel establishes a subcommittee 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.
- 4 Ensure that all Council Bodies and Scrutiny Panels consider the impact of climate change and the environment when making decisions and reviewing Council policies and strategies.
- 5 Review progress made on an annual basis via Scrutiny and Full Council.

The aim was to translate the aspiration expressed in the emergency resolution for a carbon neutral Staffordshire Moorlands 2030 into a deliverable action plan.

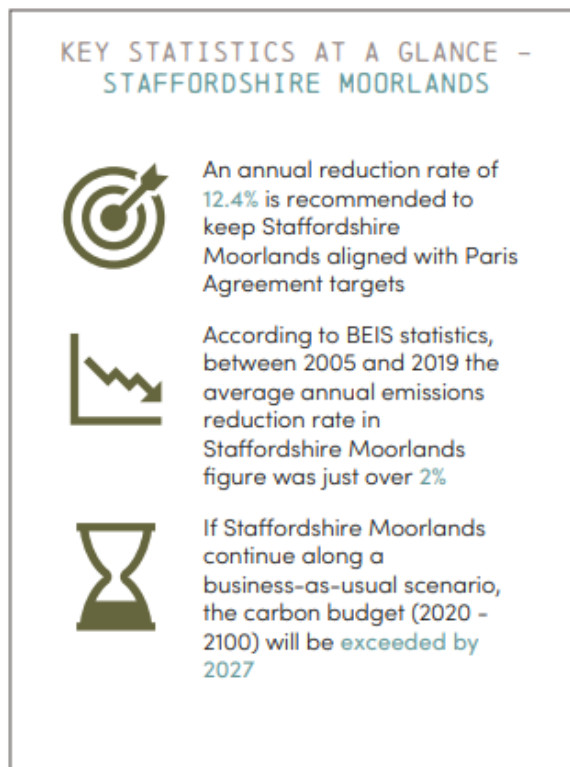
The Terms of Reference objectives have been established.

Reporting is annually with an interim report at six months along with monthly updates to Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Context

In 2018, emissions from Staffordshire Moorlands as a district totalled 905 ktCO₂e. The majority resulted from buildings (61%), on-road transport (19%) and livestock (22%).

Although emissions are reducing in Staffordshire Moorlands, the rate of reduction needs to increase to avoid breaching the limits of the carbon budget as aligned to the [2015 Paris Agreement](#).



Local authorities across the UK are thought to have a combined 3% contribution to overall UK emissions. In addition it is thought that local authorities can influence up to 33% of emissions in their areas.

Corporate Plan 2019

The Council 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 is the first time that climate change has been specifically named it as a key aim, demonstrating the Council’s commitment to putting climate change at the heart of its activities.

Climate Change Plan Part 1 2021/22

This plan sets out how the Council will tackle emissions from its own operations. It was approved in June 2021. [The plan can be found here](#)

The aims have been combined with the Part 2 Plan to address district-wide emissions.

Climate Change Plan Part 2 - 7 Ways to Net Zero

The [Climate Plan for the district emissions](#) was approved in December 2021 and has ambitious targets to meet net zero across the district by 2030.

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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

The Way We Live

The Local Plan was set in September 2020 and includes elements on integrated renewable energy generation to support new buildings reduce their lifetime emissions.

Policy SD1 “Sustainable Use of Resources” specifically requires applicants for all major-scale planning schemes to demonstrate that they have considered the energy efficiency, water conservation, sourcing of construction materials, and site orientation aspects of the scheme, and where possible the feasibility of integrating micro-renewables. The degree of detail expected will depend on the scale/complexity of the proposal.

Similarly, Policy SD3 “Sustainability Measures in Development” states the Council will support proposals to exceed legally binding thermal efficiency or water conservation standards in new or existing development; and that it will also support proposals create/expand District Heating Networks. More generally Policy SS 1 “Development Principles” states the Council will support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

The Council is a partner in the Staffordshire Warmer Homes project which successfully secured Green Homes Grant Local GHG LAD (round 1 funding) and delivers the Council's allocation of over £600,000 GHG LAD round 2 funding in Staffordshire Moorlands. The partnership has also continued to deliver energy saving measures through other schemes and the Council continued to fund Beat the Cold as our key local partner in affordable warmth/fuel poverty.

The Way We Travel

Emissions from vehicles are a significant issue in Staffordshire Moorlands. Being a mainly rural district, the reliance on private vehicles for personal journeys is significant. We also have several thoroughfares for haulage vehicles.

Separate to the Climate Change Plans is the [Air Quality Assessment](#) which sets out our strategy to improve air quality. The co-benefits of this to climate change mitigation are clear as much of the activity is to encourage either modal shift to active transport methods or improving efficiency of vehicles.

The Air Quality Staffordshire Project is a major campaign to raise awareness of air quality issues across Staffordshire, predominantly: to

- Engage with business to educate on air quality and to develop travel plans;
- Visits to schools to educate children on air quality and deliver an anti-idling campaign to parents;
- Deliver a website “air aware campaign” and information on air quality, including [downloadable information](#);
- Develop a joint Electric Vehicle strategy for the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, including district partners and third parties.

[The Local Plan](#) adopted in September 2020 sets out ambitions to reduce the need to travel or make it safer and easier to travel by more sustainable forms of transport. (Spatial Objective SO11)

This approach also reflects the aims of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan priorities to promote improved health and protect the environment. The Council will aim to ensure as far as possible that development minimises traffic problems and maximises the potential benefits of accessibility and new infrastructure to the wider community through active travel methods.

Our fleet and operation partners' fleets has been analysed by the Energy Saving Trust to support a forward plan to systematically improve engine types, efficiencies and fuel use.

Our pioneering project to use spent hydrogenated vegetable oil on suitable vehicles, will not only reduce CO₂ emissions but also particulates.

The Way We Work

We are embedding Climate Change considerations across our service delivery and operations. All Council reports now have a section to include Climate Change considerations. Climate Change reporting is governed through the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Group is chaired by the Head of Communities and Climate Change with all Heads of Service. It meets monthly to review and track progress against the aims.

The Council is accredited with the Carbon Literacy Bronze Award.

All the Heads of Service have had training in Carbon Literacy. Each service has nominated a member of staff to become their 'Climate Champion' and to attend Train the Trainer in Carbon Literacy to disseminate through their service to embed across service and project design and delivery. This will follow up with a peer to peer network and communications programme to support staff adopt climate friendly actions.

A performance indicator framework has been established. Baselines and monitoring systems are being set out for each if these aims to be incorporated into the Corporate Plan and performance framework. Where possible these will be SMART targets using appropriate data streams and frequency of reporting.

We aim to reduce the energy used in our buildings and by our service delivery partners. Energy and water audits have been carried out to identify potential improvements to efficiency and inclusion of generation opportunities. These are being aligned to the Asset Management Plan and our Capital Investment.

Mechanisms to monitor and target energy use are being developed.

Funding has been applied for to support development of specialist Heat Decarbonisation Plans for key buildings.

Capacity to deliver energy and water management will be incorporated into the Assets Service restructure.

The Alliance is members of UK100, APSE and the Local Energy Partnership where we can use peer experience to help build capacity and knowledge.

We are active members of the Sustainability Board for Staffordshire County and Climate Matters Staffordshire and sit on other groups with countywide ambitions.

The Agile working policy for staff has enabled suitable roles to use blended working approaches to reduce travel time and resources for both commuting and meetings.

The Council are developing a sustainable procurement policy to include climate change considerations in product and services provisions. This will support the green and circular economy by pushing our values up the supply chain.

Where possible we work with local providers; 15-20% of contracts over £5k were awarded to local providers over the last financial year.

An assessment, commissioned through Anthesis, provided a snapshot of the possible emissions related to some of our procurement activities. Due to the inherently difficult nature of carbon accounting in procurement, it provides an indicative snapshot in time. The report contains commercially sensitive information and will not be published, but will be used to inform the Council's approach to reducing emissions through the procurement of services

Our newsletter to businesses is used to share information on support available to them for courses, grants and advice on sustainability.

The Way We Make Energy

The [Local Plan](#) has a Spatial Objective (SO2) to create a district where development minimises its impact on the environment, helps to mitigate and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and makes efficient use of resources. An objective of this is Policy Sustainable Development (SD2) "Renewable/ Low-Carbon Energy" states that the Council will strive to meet part of the District's future energy demand through renewables, and in general will support renewables schemes (subject to considerations).

An initial audit of Council owned buildings has been carried out to assess the feasibility of installing onsite renewables. These are to support informing the Asset Management Plan and capital investments in renewable energy measures.

The Way We Look After Our Environment

The [Local Plan](#) set out policies to 'protect and improve the character and distinctiveness of the countryside and its landscape, biodiversity and geological resources' Spatial Objective 9.

The [Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy](#) 2018, aims to develop green corridors for wildlife, enhance and improve important ecological sites and provide better connection to green spaces for people.

To help us deliver these objectives, the management of country parks is transferring to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. As experts in managing and developing diverse ecologies and encouraging people to engage with nature, they are well placed to maximise the impact of these important spaces.

We are also working closely with them to deliver a Plan for Nature. 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. It will also incorporate our strategic approach to improve and increase tree cover.

Anthesis was commissioned to carry out a more in-depth look at agricultural and land use emissions, and carbon offsetting given the rural nature of the district. This forms part of the Council's on-going

commitment to adopting a data-led approach and making information available for use by the Council and others to encourage, inform and shape their work.

The analysis shows that:

- Emissions from agricultural activity are significant, totalling 236ktCO₂e.
- Livestock emissions, mainly from cattle, dominate agricultural emissions in Staffordshire Moorlands.
- Over half of the district is permanent grassland, whilst arable crops make up around 22% of land across the district. This includes grazing land covering wetlands and peatland.
- Peatland plays a significant role in agriculture and land use (ALU) emissions as a carbon sink. However, further research on peatland specific to Staffordshire Moorland should be conducted in partnership with Moors for the Future.
- The emissions reductions scenarios conclude that, under a high ambition scenario, the transition of Staffordshire Moorlands' diet away from livestock (49ktCO₂e) as well as the transition from grassland to woodland (69ktCO₂e) can reduce up to 56% of emissions from ALU sources.
- Carbon offsetting is often considered to address residual emissions or the councils 'gap to target' when analysing reduction scenarios.
- Offsetting for local authorities falls under strong public scrutiny, due to its inability to retain benefits locally.
- Authority Based Insetting can offer an alternative solution to typical offsetting practices.

The report sets out the following steps for the Council to consider:

- Maintain continued engagement with farmers and landowners on this agenda
- Prioritise woodland coverage
- Conduct more specific analysis of potential sites for afforestation.
- Collect more accurate data on local farming practices and landowner carbon emissions
- Build understanding of the importance of soils in mitigating carbon emissions
- Define and communicate suitable finance options for farmers and landholders
- Establish the council's stance on Carbon offsetting within their net-zero ambition.
- Explore opportunities for insetting

We will consider the analysis and recommendations within the Anthesis report during the creation of the Plan for Nature with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

Specific projects we have delivered include the [Wilder River Churnet](#) enhancing the natural flood defences and water quality on several tributaries along the Churnet. This was in partnership with, amongst others, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and funded through Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

23 new community orchards have been planted across the district to encourage access to fruit trees and increase tree cover.

Since it was launched last year, Pick-Fit has had over 500 registrations and seen litter-pickers collect over 3 tonnes of litter. It has recently been recognised as [highly recommended in the MJ Awards](#) . This project aims to combine health and wellbeing with a healthy environment.

The Way We Manage Waste

The Council continues to be a high performer achieving a 56.4% recycling rate, which is the highest

in Staffordshire and in the top 30 in the country.

Our partner at AES have trialled electric light vehicles and refuse wagons in a programme to decarbonise our fleet and operations. We now are using recycled hydrogenated vegetable oil (a waste product) to fuel some of our fleet. Reducing carbon emissions and particulates while supporting the waste hierarchy and using a waste product.

We encourage people and businesses to follow the waste hierarchy. AES has an engagement vehicle and officer who attends events to speak to the public about how to improve waste. We have proactive campaigns on fly tipping to encourage responsible waste disposal.

We will use our sustainable procurement policy to push up the supply chain to encourage the creation of a circular economy and help suppliers consider cradle to cradle product and systems design.

We recognise several community groups are establishing localised repair cafes. We will offer support to promote these types of initiatives where possible.

The Way We Can Help Change to Occur

We recognise the importance of working with external agencies, community groups, businesses, parish and town councils, academic communities and so on to support us deliver this cross cutting agenda.

The Council is engaged with a number of key agencies to assist with the development of our plans including The Midlands Energy Hub, the Energy Saving Trust, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Anthesis sustainability consultancy and Keele University.

We sit on several steering and working groups with Staffordshire County Council and our peers in other districts and boroughs and the Peak District National Park.

As part of the Alliance, we are able to benefit from learning from colleagues and projects in Derbyshire and the East Midlands which we can use where applicable.

The Council has joined the UK100 group of local authorities with ambitious climate change targets. This includes access to the Countryside Climate Network. We are also active members of many other peer networks to share learning and support including Climate Matters Staffordshire.

We recognise that we must lead by example to other organisations such as with driving the supply chain with a procurement policy and procedures. Meanwhile we must leverage the collective impact of community groups, parishes and town councils to help each other and be more than the sum of their parts when it comes to taking action to help people to action.

We also recognise our ability to lobby and respond to consultations as a Council and through our networks. An example of [lobbying to urge all Councils to adopt a climate change strategy is minuted here](#) (item 35).

We sit on the Defra Local Adaptation Advisory Panel to steer the agenda for nature based solutions to climate adaptation.

One of our next steps is to set out a comprehensive engagement and communication plan based on a stakeholder assessment to help us identify those key leverage points to accelerate the take up of actions.

Our [Climate Change Fund](#) is open to community groups who need a little help to get a project started or sustain it. We hope this will help to expand our network of interested groups outside those who we know that already doing what they can to move the agenda forward.

Performance Indicators

AIM	MEASURE	BASELINE	TARGET	
			2025	2030
We will support action including retrofitting to reduce fuel poverty, prevent health hazards relating to damp and excess cold. and reduce emissions from homes	Emissions from residential buildings	192,070 tCO2e		Net Zero
	10% of households will be living in fuel poverty by 2025 and 0% by 2030. 2019	16%	10%	0%
	Proportion of properties with an EPC - lodged in 2019/2020	13%		
	Proportion of properties EPC with rating D to G - lodged in 2019/2020	72%		
Reduce emissions from Council vehicles and Council related activity	Fleet vehicles - Total tCO2e. Cal Year 2019. Incl waste fleet	1556 tCO2e		
	Fleet vehicles - total miles calendar year 2019	380,971		

	Officer business miles (grey fleet) - CO2e (2019/2020)	32.4		
	Officer business miles (grey fleet) - total miles (2019/2020)	122,960		
	Councillor business miles - CO2e (2019/2020)	0.714		
	Councillor business miles - total miles (2019/2020)	2521		
We will encourage and support the increased use of EV vehicles	% of EVs TBD			
We will work in partnership to reduce travel and transport related emissions	Commuter journeys by public transport, cycling or walking	2011 - 27% journeys not by driving car/van	37.50%	40%
	Vehicle-related emissions	150 ktCO2e in 2018		
We will reduce energy use and improve the energy efficiency of Council buildings including Leisure Centres We will switch the Council's energy supply to 100% green energy	Emissions from Council buildings - SMDC	230		Net Zero
	Emissions from leisure centres - SMDC	793		

We will reduce the number of products purchased by the Council, chose low carbon/carbon neutral products where possible, and seek to use contractors who are working towards carbon neutrality	Procurement emissions¹ - TBD			
We will increase tree cover, and improve wildlife habitats and biodiversity	There will be 20% urban canopy cover by 2025 and 24% by 2030.	17-19%	20%	24%
We will work in partnership to deliver our Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)	Mortality attributable to PM2.5 pollution across the District will remain below the national average.	4.80%		
	Annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO2) in Leek and Cellarhead by 2030	Leek 39.4 µg/m³ and Cellarhead 42.3 µg/m³ (2019 Air Quality Report)		Reduce by 25.5 µg/m³ In Leek and by 34.6 µg/m³ in Cellarhead by 2030
We will implement measures to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's waste and recycling service	Emissions from waste (fleet)	919 tCO2e		Net Zero
We will work with Staffordshire County Council and other Staffordshire Councils to encourage recycling and the broader greener agenda	% of waste reused, recycled or composted by 2025.	54% est 21/22		
	Residual waste per household in 2021/22	418 kg in 21/22		

Next Steps

Develop Performance Indicators

The identified indicators need targets and milestones to be set. Some existing targets need refined based on the emerging evidence of assessments being carried out or volatile market forces, for example, Fuel Poverty related to energy costs. These will be SMART where possible.

Additional indicators could be added in the future may include

- Energy reduction and on site generation
- Business Miles by active travel (walk/bike/scooter) or by public transport
- Water use
- Phase out fleet to low carbon
- Decarbonisation plans for Net Zero buildings
- Space utilisation
- Off-site generation
- Number of referrals to Beat the Cold
- Number of energy efficient measure installed
- Nature based indicators
- Air Quality targets

Develop Delivery Plans

Through the wider consultation in the development of the plans, many ideas and initiatives were suggested. Anthesis have collated all these ideas and scored them in terms of impact along with a possible timescale - long/medium and short term actions.

These actions will help to build up a portfolio of projects and initiatives to enable reductions in carbon emissions. Through the Climate Change and Biodiversity Delivery Group and the Climate Champions network we will use Anthesis' assessment and overlay an internal perspective on the suggested actions. This will help us to build a better picture of what we can achieve with existing resources and programmes, where we could easily add value to existing programmes and then understand the gaps where we need to increase capacity, knowledge, seek funding, lobby for support etc.

Engagement – work across the borough to embed and encourage change to occur.

We are carrying out a stakeholder analysis to identify those across the district who can leverage and accelerate change. This will include actors from across the community from, but not exclusive to, businesses, community groups, support agencies, other public sector, schools, parish and town councils, faith groups and youth groups.

It was clear from the LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge report from January 2022 that people are keen

to see progress on this agenda and the Council must communicate this better to engender support and build confidence.

Climate Change cuts across all of the activities across the district, as such each project is a component part of the solutions and will each need a different engagement strategy depending on the stakeholders and influencers.

Reports

An interim report on the Plan will be made available in November with the Annual report scheduled for July 2023 through the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The revised Air Quality Strategy is being developed and will co-benefit targets for our climate change ambitions.

We are developing our biodiversity strategy called A Local Plan for Nature this will encompass our strategic approach to tree planting.