

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Cabinet
14 February 2023**

TITLE:	Climate Change Six Monthly Update
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Joe Porter - Portfolio Holder for Climate Change
CONTACT OFFICER:	David Smith - Head of Communities and Climate Change
WARDS INVOLVED:	All

Appendices Attached – Appendix A: Update; Appendix B: Delivery of 2019 Undertakings.

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The Council's committed to provide an annual report and a six-month update report on progress made towards delivery of its Climate Change Strategy. The annual report was presented to Committee in July 2022. This report provides a six-monthly update and focuses on identifying priority activities for 2023 to 2024.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That Cabinet:

- note the contents of the report and progress to date, and
- approve the priority activities for 2023/2024.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council approved its Climate Change Plan (Aiming Low: The Way to Net Zero 2021 to 2030) in December 2021. The plan was independently reviewed by Climate Emergency UK, who awarded it a score of 87%: the second highest score by a district council in the country. The Council achieved maximum marks for "commitment and integration", "community engagement and communications", "co-benefits", "diversity and social inclusion" and "education, skills and training".

- 3.2 The Council committed to providing regular updates on delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy and an annual report to the Council's

Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel (COSP) on the progress towards delivering the plan.

- 3.3 The first annual report was presented to the COSP on 11 July 2022. The report highlighted a wide-range of activities that had taken place over the previous 12 months:
- Employed a dedicated Climate Change and Biodiversity Officer,
 - Formed the Moorlands Green Network, Parish Council Climate Change Forum, and developing a youth engagement strategy.
 - Introduced a Community Climate Change Fund
 - Established a Climate Change and Biodiversity Delivery Group
 - Planted 22 community orchards.
 - Trialled and subsequently introduced using waste hydrogenated vegetable oil in Council fleet vehicles. The trial showed that CO₂ emissions could be reduced by up to 88% per annum was possible, reducing emissions from 553 tonnes annually to approximately 67 tonnes. Monitoring of tailpipe emissions revealed CO₂ emission reductions of 9.5%, NO_x by 31% and PN by 44%.
 - Trained Heads of Service and Climate Champions in Carbon Literacy, resulting in Council being awarded the bronze accreditation by the Carbon Literacy Project (the first Council to achieve this in Staffordshire).
 - Completed energy and water reviews of all Council buildings.
- 3.4 The next annual update will be presented in July 2023. This report provides an update on delivery of the plan and focuses mainly on setting priorities for 2023/2024.
- 3.5 An earlier version of the report was considered by the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel (COSP) on 16 January 2023. This report summarises, and responds to, the main points raised at that meeting.
- 3.6 Appendix A provides detail of progress since the annual report was presented in July 2022. The next annual report will be published in July 2023 (subject to scheduling of Committee meetings for the next municipal year).
- 3.7 Key activities outlined in the interim report at Appendix A include:
- A review of the EV charging delivery options was presented to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the 16th Jan 2023, where it was recommended that the Council should pursue a direct delivery model that sees the Council retain direct control over installation of EV infrastructure and its operation. A delivery plan is being prepared to roll out EV charging facilities based on the strategic priorities identified in the EV strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands.
 - The Council funded 12 local climate and nature projects through its Community Climate Change Fund.
 - Introduction of a revised procurement strategy to embed sustainability and low carbon considerations into decision making for the procurement of goods, services and works.

- Working with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to develop a Plan For Nature and to submit a bid to the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund.
 - Lighting surveys at Moorlands House
 - Energy audits of the Council's estate
 - Replacement of the public realm lighting in Staffordshire Moorlands that the district council have responsibility for with LED lighting
 - Successful application to the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) for a £1.9m project to replace the traditional fossil fuel heating systems with a new air source heat pump system, combined with the installation of solar panels to the roof of the building of Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre
 - Replacing the contract for the Council's electricity supply to ensure that 100% comes from renewable sources (eg solar, wind and hydro, but not biomass) from 2024, which will result in zero emissions for electricity.
- 3.8 Appendix B provides an assessment of the delivery of the undertakings that were given by the Council when declaring a climate change emergency in 2019.
- 3.9 Discussions with the Portfolio Holder, at the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel and with key stakeholders, including Moorlands Climate Action, have (re)emphasised the importance of targeting our limited resources on the areas where we can have the greatest impact.
- 3.10 Our Climate Change Plan, which was acknowledged by Climate Emergency UK to be one of the best in the country, is based upon our 7 Ways to Net Zero approach. A short video that explains the Council's approach can be found on our website or at <https://youtu.be/D9B64fGchq8>.
- 3.11 We have recognised the need to concentrate our efforts and in 2023/2024 we are proposing to focus on three key areas:
- The Way We Live, and zeroing in on domestic energy,
 - The Way We Look After our Environment, and
 - The Way We Can Help Change to Occur, zeroing in on working with young people.
- 3.12 A focus on domestic energy provides opportunities to reduce domestic emissions and supports work taking place to respond to the cost-of-living crisis which has, in part, been fuelled by the volatility in the energy markets.
- 3.13 A focus on nature initiatives responds to the community consultation that was carried out prior to the introduction of the Climate Change Plan, and which emphasised the importance that our communities place on nature and their local environment. It supports delivery of biodiversity requirements introduced by the Environment Act 2020; builds upon strong relationship with nature-focussed groups including Staffordshire Wildlife Trust; and reflects the local geography with our abundance of natural assets.
- 3.14 A focus on engagement with young people will help to further raise awareness of climate change, encourage local democratic participation, involve young

people in volunteering and project work, and provide young people with useful life skills and experience.

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

- 4.1 This report supports delivery of Aim 4 of the Corporate Plan: “*To protect and improve the environment, and respond to the climate emergency*”. The focus on domestic energy from a climate change perspective also has a co-benefit / ancillary benefit for fuel poverty, health and cost of living, which helps to deliver priorities under Aim 1 of the Corporate Plan: “*To help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work*”.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 None identified

6. **Implications**

- a. Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

None

- b. Workforce

Delivery of the plan is co-ordinated through the internal Climate Change and Biodiversity Delivery Group. Heads of Service are responsible for highlighting workforce issues within their objectives in the plan.

- c. Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

None

- d. Financial Considerations

The plan forms a programme of discrete projects. Some of which need to be scoped to understand the requirements. Financial implications would be considered within each project.

- e. Legal

Local Authorities do not have a statutory obligation to respond to climate change.

- f. Climate Change

The plan sets out the aims of the work programme for 2023 / 2024 to deliver the Climate Change Plan.

g. Consultation

Discussions to inform this report have taken place at the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel, in meetings with partners such as Moorlands Climate Action, and at County Level under the Staffordshire Sustainability Board.

h. Risk Assessment

None.

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

[Aiming Low Summary](#)

[Annual Report 2021/22
Climate Change Action Plan Part 1](#)

[Climate Change Action Plan 2021 to 2030
Part 2](#)

Contact details

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7. Detail

7.1 The Council approved its Climate Change Plan (Aiming Low: The Way to Net Zero 2021 to 2030) in December 2021. The plan was independently reviewed by Climate Emergency UK, who awarded it a score of 87%: the second highest score by a district council in the country. The Council achieved maximum marks for “commitment and integration”, “community engagement and communications”, “co-benefits”, “diversity and social inclusion” and “education, skills and training”.

7.2 The Council committed to providing regular updates on delivery of the Council’s Climate Change Strategy and an annual report to the Council’s Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel (COSP) on the progress that has been made towards delivering the plan.

7.3 The first annual report was presented to the COSP on 11 July 2022. The report highlighted a wide-range of activities that had taken place over the previous 12 months:

- Employed a dedicated Climate Change and Biodiversity Officer,
- Formed the Moorlands Green Network, Parish Council Climate Change Forum, and developing a youth engagement strategy.
- Introduced a Community Climate Change Fund
- Established a Climate Change and Biodiversity Delivery Group
- Planted 22 community orchards.

- Trialled and subsequently introduced using waste hydrogenated vegetable oil in Council fleet vehicles. The trial showed that CO₂ emissions could be reduced by up to 88% per annum was possible, reducing emissions from 553 tonnes annually to approximately 67 tonnes. Monitoring of tailpipe emissions revealed CO₂ emission reductions of 9.5%, NO_x by 31% and PN by 44%.
 - The trial also confirmed there were no detrimental effects to the engines nor effect on mpg, demonstrating that HVO is safe to use.
 - Trained Heads of Service and Climate Champions in Carbon Literacy, resulting in Council being awarded the bronze accreditation by the Carbon Literacy Project (the first Council to achieve this in Staffordshire).
 - Completed energy and water reviews of all Council buildings.
- 7.4 The next annual update will be presented in July 2023. This report provides interim information on delivery of the plan but focuses mainly on setting priorities for 2023/2024.
- 7.5 Discussions with the Portfolio Holder, at the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel and with key stakeholders, including Moorlands Climate Action, have (re)emphasised the importance of targeting our limited resources on the areas where we can have the greatest impact.
- 7.6 Our Climate Change Strategy, which was acknowledged by Climate Emergency UK to be one of the best in the country, is based upon our 7 Ways to Net Zero approach. A short video that explains the Council's approach can be found on our website or at <https://youtu.be/D9B64fGchq8>.
- 7.7 We have recognised the need to concentrate our efforts and in 2023/24 we are proposing to focus on three key areas:
- The Way We Live, and zeroing-in on domestic energy,
 - The Way We Look After our Environment, and
 - The Way We Can Help Change to Occur, zeroing-in on working with young people.

Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.8 The COSP considered a report on delivery of the Climate Change Plan at its meeting on 16 January 2023. The discussion was wide ranging and can be usefully grouped as follows:
- a) Assessment against the 2019 declaration of a climate change emergency
 - b) Performance management
 - c) Town and Country Planning
 - d) Reducing carbon emissions from the Council's buildings,
 - e) The procurement of 'green electricity' for the Council
 - f) Your Housing Group action to reduce emissions.
- 7.9 Members of Moorlands Climate Action (MCA) distributed a document in the Council Chamber immediately prior to the COSP, which asked Councillors to consider several points. Neither Officers nor Members of the Committee had

advanced sight of the document, nor had they been forewarned that it would be distributed. This was unfortunate since members of the Cabinet met with representatives of MCA on Thursday 12 January 2023 without the document being mentioned. In addition to raising concerns about the openness of the meetings with MCA, the approach denied an opportunity for a detailed and direct discussion with MCA about their thoughts and made it impossible to provide a full response to the document at the COSP meeting.

8 Update on Delivery of the Climate Change Plan and Priorities for 2023/2024

Interim Update

8.1. The annual report on progress against delivering the Climate Change plan was considered by the Council in July 2022. Appendix A provides detail of progress since then. The next annual report will be published in July 2023 (subject to scheduling of Committee meetings for the next municipal year).

8.2 Key activities outlined in the interim report at Appendix A include:

- A review of the EV charging delivery options was presented to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the 16th Jan 2023, where it was recommended that the Council should pursue a direct delivery model that sees the Council retain direct control over installation of EV infrastructure and its operation. A delivery plan is being prepared to roll out EV charging facilities based on the strategic priorities identified in the EV strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands.
- Introduction of a revised procurement strategy to embed sustainability and low carbon considerations into decision making for the procurement of goods, services and works.
- Working with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to develop a Plan For Nature
- Lighting surveys at Moorlands House.
- Energy audits of the Council's estate.
- Replacement of the public realm lighting in Staffordshire Moorlands that the district council have responsibility for with LED lighting.
- Successful application to the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) for a £1.9m project to replace the traditional fossil fuel heating systems with a new air source heat pump system, combined with the installation of solar panels to the roof of the building of Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre.
- Replacing the contract for the Council's electricity supply to ensure that 100% comes from renewable sources (eg solar, wind and hydro, but not biomass) from 2024, which will result in zero emissions for electricity.
- An emissions performance framework is being developed and will evolve as more data is readily available through partners and procurement conditions.

Priorities

8.3. Discussions with the Portfolio Holder, at the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel and with key stakeholders, including Moorlands Climate Action, have

(re)emphasised the importance of targeting our limited resources on the areas where we can have the greatest impact.

- 8.4 Our Climate Change Strategy, which was acknowledged by Climate Emergency UK to be one of the best in the country, is based upon our 7 Ways to Net Zero approach. You can find a short video that explains our approach on our website or at <https://youtu.be/D9B64fGchq8>.
- 8.5 We have recognised the need to concentrate our efforts and in 2023/2024 we are proposing to focus on three key areas:
- The Way We Live, and zeroing in on domestic energy,
 - The Way We Look After our Environment, and
 - The Way We Can Help Change to Occur, spotlighting working with young people.
- 8.6 This is in addition to on-going work to reduce the Council's direct emissions, support for community groups, and other core Council activity that contribute towards the climate change plan.
- 8.7 The Council is recruiting a new Biodiversity Officer post to support this prioritisation. This new Officer will focus on 'The Way we Look After our Environment', which will free up some time for our Climate Change Officer to increase her focus on the domestic energy agenda. It is likely that the officers will support each other to deliver the work with young people.

The Way We Live (Domestic energy)

- 8.8 In 2018, Staffordshire Moorlands' in-boundary emissions totalled 905 ktCO₂e. The majority resulted from buildings (61%), on-road transport (19%) and livestock (22%). Around 20% of building emissions came from residential buildings.¹
- 8.9 A focus on domestic energy provides opportunities to reduce domestic emissions and supports work taking place to respond to the cost-of-living crisis which has, in part, been fuelled by the volatility in the energy markets.
- 8.10 In 2023/2024 we will:

Support with energy bills

- Support roll-out of the Fuel Bank that the Council has introduced in partnership with the Fuel Bank Foundation and Beat The Cold. This provides an important safety net for people on pre-payment meters (PPMs) who have been, or are at risk of, self-disconnection. In addition to access to emergency credit, the scheme also provides advice on reducing energy use and budgeting. The wrap around advice service can support benefits check to maximise income.
- Continue to fund Beat The Cold to provide energy saving, money and debt advice.

¹ SCATTER CITIES data are currently being updated

Energy Efficiency Measures.

- Explore options for encouraging retrofitting;
- Support delivery of the ECO4² grant scheme and other emerging schemes (eg (Home Upgrade Grant: Phase 2 (HUG2), and ECO Plus) with partners such as Beat The Cold. We will use information held by our Revenues and Benefits Service to identify eligible residents and contact them to encourage take-up. We also want to establish a GP referral pathway.
- publicise Retrofit Academy training offer for West Midlands residents for PAS2035;
- publicise opportunities for local businesses to expand services to support the retrofit and renewable supply and skills;
- engage with businesses to explore opportunities for self-funding retrofit service for private owners;
- scope the potential for a programme of bulk buying photovoltaic (solar panels) in partnership with other local authorities.

Social Housing.

- Engage with Your Housing to implement their energy targets of “EPC C by 2030”.

Private Rented Sector.

- We will enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector.

Communication.

- Signpost people to energy saving advice and schemes, and related information.

Partnership working.

- Review our arrangements with Beat The Cold and Staffordshire Warmer Homes Partnership to maximise the benefits for our residents.

The Way We Look After Our Environment

8.11 According to the World Bank, nature-based solutions (NbS):

- can provide around 37% of the global mitigation needed until 2030 to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement³;
- play a key role in climate change adaptation and building resilience in landscapes and communities, and
- provide a cost-effective way of addressing climate change while also addressing biodiversity and land degradation (thereby addressing several problems at once).

² The Energy Company Obligation (ECO), is a government energy efficiency scheme for Great Britain, administered by Ofgem. This scheme is now in its 4th iteration. ECO4 will be a four-year scheme from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2026. The main objective of ECO4 is to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock occupied by low income and vulnerable households. One route that can be used to identify these households is ‘ECO4 Flexibility’ (ECO4 Flex). Under ECO4 Flex, a participating Local Authority, can refer private tenure households that it considers to be living in fuel poverty or on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.

³ The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

- 8.12 A 2021 report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the UN Environment Programme summarised the major studies into the mitigation potential of nature-based solutions and reported that NbS across all land-based ecosystems could result in removals of between 5-11.7GtCO₂e per year by 2030 and between 10-18GtCO₂e per year by 2050.
- 8.13 The Council carried out a public consultation on attitudes to climate change to assist in the development of its Climate Change Plan. When asked about their concerns about the impact of climate change, the top responses were:
- “*loss of animals, plants, habitats and biodiversity*” (93% concerned, of which 63% were very concerned),
 - “*extreme weather*” (91% and 63%),
 - “*environment destruction*” (90% and 52%), and
 - “*species extinction*” (87% and 47%).
- 8.14 In another question, 73% of our residents told us that “*protecting our green spaces, habitats and wildlife*” was very important (and a further 17% said that it was quite important).
- 8.15 We know that the local environment is important to our residents, and it is one of the key things that attracts visitors to the area. This is also reflected in the large number of nature-focused community groups in the area that focus on many different areas of interest including, but certainly not limited to, White Peak Farmers⁴ and Churnet Valley Farmers⁵, the Back Dane Trust⁶, Swifts of Leek, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Local Group (Leek)⁷, Biddulph in Bloom⁸, and the Caldron and Uttoxeter Canals Trust⁹.
- 8.16 As well as supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation, NbS has the potential to deliver a range of other co-benefits which, according to the intervention, include water management; urban regeneration; social cohesion; economic opportunities and green jobs; green space management, air quality, and public health and well-being.
- 8.17 Many of these co-benefits have strong links to other areas of Council responsibility including economic and physical regeneration, management of our parks and open spaces, pollution control, and sport and physical activity.
- 8.18 In addition to the above benefits, a focus on nature supports the Council’s delivery of biodiversity requirements introduced by the Environment Act 2020 and reflects the local geography with our abundance of natural assets.

⁴ www.whitepeakfarmers.org.uk/

⁵ <https://churnet-valley.guide/organisation/churnet-valley-farmers>

⁶ <https://backdane.co.uk/>

⁷ www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/get-involved/adults/local-groups

⁸ www.biddulph.co.uk/biddulph-in-bloom/

⁹ www.cuct.org.uk/

8.19 In 2023/24 we will:

- Develop and deliver a Plan for Nature with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to guide actions to be taken by the District Council and others to halt and reverse the decline of the natural world across the district by 2030.
- Prepare for the new Biodiversity Net Gain duty¹⁰.
- Work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to submit, and hopefully then deliver, a bid to the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund for a project that uses nature to encourage more community-led climate action. The emerging aims of the project are to:
 - Support the community to improve selected green spaces
 - Provide training, equipment and support to individuals and groups within the community to enable them to collect evidence through citizen science on how best to manage green spaces
 - Empower individuals across the Staffordshire Moorlands to enact change on green space management
 - Increase people's connection to nature by giving them the opportunities to be involved in habitat restoration and data collection
 - Combine art and nature, using the power of storytelling to capture people's imaginations and help educate on the importance of the environment in our everyday lives (linking to Outside – the Creative People and Places Project that is funded by the Arts Council England).

How We Can Help Change To Occur (Young People)

8.20 Local authorities¹¹ have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas and UK100 estimate that local authorities are responsible for around 6% of emissions. Our Climate Change Plan recognises that more than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions. It is therefore crucial that we continue to encourage our residents, and businesses, to reduce their own carbon footprints.

8.21 A focus on engagement with young people will help to further raise awareness of climate change, encourage local democratic participation, involve young people in volunteering and project work, and provide young people with useful life skills and experience.

8.22 We have been working with Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS) to develop an innovative youth engagement project that began in January 2023. This is designed to be a 3-year project (to be reviewed at the end of the first year) incorporating three main elements:

- **Raising knowledge and awareness.** The project will support up to 10 local organisations, including schools, colleges, alternative education

¹⁰ Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/schedule/14/enacted

¹¹ For Staffordshire Moorlands, the local authorities are Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Staffordshire County Council, and the Peak District National Park Authority.

providers, youth organisations, uniformed groups, etc. to undertake an awareness raising session around Climate Change. This will hopefully lead to the creation of a network to enable the sharing of information, advice and guidance including best practice, practical ideas and promotion of wider engagement and/or volunteering opportunities to increase local access.

- **Promoting local democracy.** The project will include an Annual Climate Change Parliamentary Style Youth Debate in SMDC Chamber for approximately 40 young people. The project will work with young people in advance of the debate to raise their levels of knowledge, awareness and confidence to speak/act in relation to Climate Change.
- **Taking action.** The project will provide support for up to 10 schools / youth organisations to carry out practical projects led by young people and / or increased Volunteering by young people that make a real difference to their locality. Where appropriate, project funding could be accessed via the County Council or District Councils' Climate Change Funds.

8.23 In 2023/2024 we will:

- Deliver our youth engagement project with SCVYS.
- Work alongside other partners such as OUTSIDE and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to develop other ways of encouraging further involvement by young people in the climate change and nature agendas.
- Continue to provide and promote the Moorlands Community Climate Action Fund.
- Continue to bring voluntary groups together in our Moorlands Green Network meetings.
- Continue to regularly promote climate change and nature action through our website, social media channels and face-to-face.

Response to Points Raised at Overview and Scrutiny

a) Assessment of the 2019 undertakings to support the declaration of a climate change emergency

8.24 The MCA document that was distributed to Overview and Scrutiny members before their meeting on 16 January 2023 looked back to the climate emergency declaration of 10 July 2019. This was an important moment for the Council and MCA played an important, leading role in lobbying for, and ultimately helping to formulate, the declaration that pledged action towards making the Staffordshire Moorlands carbon neutral by 2030. The MCA document provided MCA's thoughts on the delivery of the undertakings made in 2019 to support the declaration of a climate emergency. MCA felt that the Council had met two of its undertakings (numbers 1 and 4 on the table at Appendix B), had partially delivered two other (numbers 3 and 5 on the table) and had failed to deliver one (number 2 on the table). No evidence was provided to support MCA's ratings.

8.25 Much has of course changed locally, nationally and internationally since 2019. It is important that we continue to move forward and the report presented at

the COSP on 16 January sought to consider the delivery of the Councils Climate Change plan for 2021 to 2030 and, most critically, to look forward towards priorities for 2023/2024. However; in response to the focus on the 2019 declaration at the meeting, for completeness and to provide a conclusion to the 2019 undertakings; the Council presents an evidence-based assessment at Appendix B.

b) Performance management

- 8.26 The Council's approach to measuring and setting emissions targets was scored 4 out of 5 in an independent review by Climate Emergency UK¹². However, the Council recognised in its Climate Change Plan that it needed to further develop its approach to target setting including milestones for action. This is consistent with the Council's stated value that we will "*Base our decision-making on science and best practice wherever possible*".
- 8.27 The Council has been developing its approach to performance' management over the last 12-months. The suggested prioritisation, and the recruitment of a new Biodiversity Officer, will provide the ability to fast-track and finalise this work.
- 8.28 Local authority reporting on emissions is voluntary and approaches vary between councils. It is our intention to use an amended form of the Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool (GGAT) that has been developed by Local Partnerships working with the LGA. The tool is designed to provide a straightforward and consistent approach for councils seeking to calculate their own carbon baseline. The tool produces summary tables and charts to help local authorities understand their most significant sources of emissions, which can then be used to prioritise actions to reduce carbon emissions. Councils are also able to benchmark their emissions with other councils to understand how their performance compares with their peers.
- 8.29 The GGAT now incorporates the use of water. We had already decided to account for this in our carbon monitoring.
- 8.30 We will be using 2019/2020 as a baseline, corresponding to the declaration of the climate change emergency, and we will report against the GGAT in the annual updates from July 2023. However, we can provide some initial information as follows:
- Carbon emission from energy used in buildings in 2021/2022 has decreased overall by 26%
 - Staff travel with grey fleet (private cars used by staff for Council duties) has decreased by 63%
 - Use of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil in waste collection vehicles could result in carbon emission reduction of 88%.
 - We are working with primary delivery partners to provide management information to feed into the foot printing tool.

¹² <https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/scoring/district/>

8.31 The GGAT will allow Councillors to monitor and scrutinise the Council's delivery of its climate change action. It will also allow improved internal monitoring by Council Services and, importantly, it will assist with target setting.

8.32 When declaring a Climate Change emergency, the Council adopted the target of achieving Net Zero by 2030 that had been recommended by Moorlands Climate Action. This was unanimously supported by Councillors. As shown in the following table, this is amongst the most ambitious targets in Staffordshire. The table also shows a variation in approach across Staffordshire: with some Council's only setting targets for Council emissions, some setting the same target for Council and District-wide emissions, and some setting different targets for Council and District-wide emissions.

Council	Net Zero Target Date	Coverage	Climate Emergency UK Total Score [†]
United Kingdom	2050	UK-wide	N/A
Staffordshire County Council	2050	Council emissions	24%
Staffordshire Moorlands District	2030	Council and District emissions	87%
Stafford Borough Council	2040	Council emissions	37%
South Staffordshire District Council	2050	Council and District emissions	34%
Newcastle Borough Council	2030	Council emissions	30%
	2050	District emissions	
East Staffordshire Borough Council	2040	Council emissions	24%
Lichfield District Council	2035	Council emissions	0% ^{††}
	2050	District emissions	
Tamworth Borough Council	2050	Council emissions	0% ^{††}
Cannock Chase District Council	2030	Council and District emissions	0% ^{††}
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	None set	Not applicable	0% ^{††}

[†] Climate Emergency UK assessed plans according to 28 questions across nine sections, based on the expert-approved checklist for Council Action Plans. Each council was marked against these criteria and given a right to reply before the scores underwent a final audit. This work was completed between June and December 2021.

^{††} Council did not have an action plan when all plans were assessed on 20th September 2021

8.33 Cannock Chase District Council commissioned AECOM in 2020 to create a costed action plan, which was delivered at the end of 2022. This excellent piece of work provides many useful lessons for other councils and was referenced in the document submitted by MCA to COSP Committee Members. The AECOM work and covering report were considered by Cannock Chase District Council's Cabinet on 12 December 2022¹³. The following points and findings are instructive:

¹³ www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/full_papers_-_cabinet_201222_public_copy.pdf

- The capital investment required to make the entire [Cannock Chase] district carbon neutral by 2030 is approximately £4.7 billion
- £21M of investment in mobilising, enabling, feasibility and commissioning costs would be required across the public and private sector between 2022/2023 and 2030 (£10M from the private sector and £11.3M from the public sector).
- It would not be possible for the [Cannock Chase District] Council to allocate the (on average) £1.3m additional financial burden per annum from within existing resources.
- The scale and pace required, and remaining timeframe for the district to become Net Zero are not considered achievable for the [Cannock Chase District] Council, its partners, or its stakeholders.
- There are three main blockers to the [Cannock Chase District] Council's 2030 district wide ambition: Finance (Public and Private); Manufacturing, Supply Chains and Technology; Scale and Pace.
- One of the areas with the greatest impact potential across the county and district is the coming together of all the Staffordshire councils' as the Staffordshire Sustainability Board.

8.34 As a result of this comprehensive, informative, and praiseworthy study, Cannock Chase District Council is amending its approach and is now proposing to:

- work on decarbonising the whole organisation to become carbon neutral by 2030 (replacing its previous target that sought to also achieve Net Zero district-wide by 2030).
- look to align with other Staffordshire council's or regional bodies, in a single (existing or new) countywide target.
- Use the AECOM costed action plan as an ongoing project reference document / catalogue and as a monitoring tool.
- Develop a strategy for the [Cannock Chase] District Council to reach net carbon zero by 2030.

8.35 In many cases, local reductions on emissions rely upon the implementation of the national Net Zero Strategy that was published in October 2021¹⁴. Several of these measures are not scheduled to begin until 2030 or later, eg:

- Fully decarbonise our power system by 2035.
- Deliver 5 GW of hydrogen production capacity by 2030, whilst halving emissions from oil and gas.
- Set a path to all new heating appliances in homes and workplaces from 2035 being low carbon.
- End the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.
- all cars must be fully zero emissions capable by 2035.

8.36 Much has changed since the declaration of a climate change emergency in 2019 including new national strategies, and legislation; greater cross-Council working within Staffordshire; and an increase in the Council's own skills, knowledge, experience and capacity.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>

8.37 In light of the discussion in this section, the Council may wish to take the opportunity to review the district-wide target that was proposed and accepted in 2019. There is a growing consensus that this target was not science-based and that it is not achievable district-wide. The Council could consider reviewing the target as part of the 2023 annual report with the aim of ensuring that the Council is working towards a target that it is science-led, achievable and consistent with the approach of other key partners within Staffordshire. It is suggested that this review only covers the district-wide target and that the current 2030 target for Council emissions is retained.

c) Town and Country Planning

8.38 The issue of reopening the Local Plan and developing a supplementary planning document has been debated by Councillors on several occasions. For example, a motion to “re-open[s] the relevant sections of the Local Plan and reviews it at the earliest opportunity in order that it can meet its clear and pressing climate change emergency commitments” was debated at the meeting of the Council on 8th December 2021. At this meeting, Members debated the motion in considerable detail and discussed the ability to review individual aspects of the Local Plan, the need to deliver the current Local Plan, and the Government review of the planning framework and supplementary planning documents. The motion was put to a vote but was lost.

8.39 The Council’s Climate Change Plan committed to produce a Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This SPD which, amongst other things, provides further detail to developers around biodiversity and green infrastructure was presented to the Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 25 January 2023.

8.40 The Climate Change Plan also committed to introducing a locally focussed Climate Change and Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document or Guidance in 2023.

d) Reducing carbon emissions from the Council’s buildings

8.41 The District Council has commissioned energy audits to

- Identify a range of options at each public building for energy improvement measures that reduce energy costs and produce carbon savings to inform the councils’ asset management strategy.
- Provide capital cost estimates for the installation of these measures, projected return on investment (including “payback” periods) and projected carbon savings for each investment option.
- Identify any revenue implications (positive or negative) that may be required to move to greener options.
- Highlight any opportunities for both councils to generate revenue by investing in energy projects at the public buildings.

- 8.42 The energy surveys covered Moorlands House, Biddulph Town Hall, Buttermarket and Trestle Market Hall, Fowlchurch Depot, Council-owned Leisure Centres, Pavilions and Industrial Estates, Public Conveniences and Cemeteries.
- 8.43 The Council is now developing its Asset Management Plan, which will present a strategy for taking the recommendations from both the energy surveys and from condition surveys forward. As Neil mentions it includes costings for capital and revenue works for the plan period and then beyond. The Plan will be brought forward for consideration by Elected Members in the next municipal year.
- 8.44 Work is on-going to replace the public realm lighting in Staffordshire Moorlands that the district council have responsibility for with LED lighting with an expected completion by end of March 2023. The total cost of this work is £134k but it is anticipated that the reduction in energy costs will mean that the cost will be recouped over a 5-year period. The project should deliver a saving of 1,476,982 Kwh over 10 years, which gives an estimated cost saving of £ 215,514.39 over 10 years. The annual CO₂e saving is calculated to be 31.36 tonnes based on UK Government GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting 2021.
- 8.45 Lighting surveys at Moorlands House have been completed by Infinity Norse and for the Council is now considering options for progressing this work, which may involve a phased programme over a number of years given the substantial costs involved.
- 8.46 A plan to improve the Councils Leisure Centres in Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek is currently being developed that includes a key focus on reducing emissions from the centre. Energy audits have been completed at each of the centres and this information has been used to inform what projects would be most advantageous to deliver in the future and help inform day to day operations. The improvements identified are wide ranging and include those achieved through minor changes to the way centres are operated, delivery of internal upgrades to items such as lighting, pool covers and plant equipment, through to major capital works such as replacement of heating systems and the introduction of solar technology.
- 8.47 Parkwood operate the centres on the Councils behalf and included information on carbon reduction and utility management in their annual report to the Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 16 March 2022. Parkwood reported a 289, 844 kWh reduction in gas consumption (amounting to a reduction in emissions of 53.33tCO₂e) and a 245,250 kWh reduction in electricity consumption (amounting to a reduction in emissions of 62.78tCO₂e). Actions that had been implemented by Parkwood included:
- Half hourly data loggers fitted to review detailed usage
 - Out of hours energy assessments completed
 - BMS systems reviewed and software upgraded to ensure savings made
 - LEDs installed in most areas now and ongoing programme of replacement
 - Energy wardens and energy action plans at all centres

- Variable speed drives (VSD's) on pumps to reduce overnight usage
- Staff training on utility management now part of induction process

8.48 In October 2022, officers used findings from the energy audits to submit an application to the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) for £1.9m towards a project to replace the traditional fossil fuel heating systems with a new air source heat pump system, combined with the installation of solar panels to the roof of the building of Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre. In January 2023, the Council received confirmation that this bid was successful and is now working through the relevant procurement and detailed design process to deliver this project by Spring 2024. Once complete, the project could save up to 300 tonnes of carbon - a significant contribution towards the Council's climate change aspirations.

8.49 The Council was successful in its application to the Levelling Up Fund for funding to improve Brough Park Leisure Centre, the Nicholson Institute Leek Market Hall. All aspects of the bid, but most notably the improvements to the leisure centre, will have a positive impact on energy efficiency. Detailed design work will take place over the next couple of months and further information will be shared with members at that stage.

e) The procurement of 'green electricity' for the Council

8.50 The Council was notified by ESPO¹⁵ of the introduction of a new electricity framework for 2024 to 2028. The Council was required to indicate whether or not it wished to renew its framework arrangement by the end of January 2023. The Portfolio Holders considered a report outlining the Council's options on 13 January 2023. Following further clarifications of the options, it was agreed that the Council would sign up to the ESPO/Total Energies Pure Green Tariff

8.51 Under this tariff, the Council's electricity consumption is matched kilowatt for kilowatt with 100% UK renewable sources (eg solar, wind and hydro, but not biomass) resulting in zero emissions for electricity under the GHG Protocol Corporate Standards, Scope 2, as the electricity will be allocated relevant Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificates. This delivers a key action in the Council's Climate Change action plan and will make a significant impact on the Council's Net Zero aspirations and support renewable electricity more broadly.

f) Your Housing Group action to reduce emissions

8.52 Your Housing Group (YHG) presented to the COSP on 16 January 2023. A report was submitted in advance and this included an energy efficiency update and information on YHG's 'damp and mould' project.

8.53 YHG are aiming to achieve a minimum EPC rating of C across their entire housing portfolio by 2030. YHG estimate that 1,960 properties in the district will require improvements to bring them up to target (this number may change as further surveying and validation is carried out)

¹⁵ ESPO is a public sector-owned professional buying organisation

- 8.54 YHG have appointed an Energy and Sustainability Manager to lead on service delivery and improvements in this area. YHG have adopted a sector-wide recognised approach of 'fabric first' improvements that predominantly includes improving the insulation and draft proofing of properties as the first step towards decarbonisation. To facilitate this, in the past 12 months YHG have appointed a specialist senior manager into the Asset Team, and also procured and mobilised an energy intelligence system to help create and model the most efficient and effective way for YHG to comply with the EPC C 2030 and Net Zero 2050 targets.
- 8.55 YHG has recently approved its first sustainability strategy, which includes key strategic aims such as ensuring specific focus on:
- biodiversity / ecology;
 - climate risk;
 - energy efficiency;
 - responsible sourcing;
 - supply chain / procurement;
 - transport;
 - waste; and
 - water.
- 8.56 In 2022 YHG and delivery partners carried out installations to around 1500 properties across the Northwest and surrounding regions utilising ECO3 funding totalling £1.3m. Only a small percentage (around 7%) were in Staffordshire Moorlands due to eligibility criteria. The ECO3 funding stream has now expired and YHG are working to continue with improvement works into 2023/024 with ECO4 funding, and any other funding streams which are currently in development.
- 8.57 1960 of the 2726 properties in the district have a band D EPC rating (the national average) or below, but only 137 are in band E-F. Those properties in bands E-F will see works carried out very early into our programme of works which we expect to commence later this year.
- 8.58 Council Officers will engage with the new Energy and Sustainability Manager to support improvements in the district. YHG have also made recent changes at senior management level and have committed to review their approach to engaging with the Council and the Council's members, particularly those with significant stock holdings within their wards.