

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

8 October 2024

TITLE:	Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr Nigel Yates – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Gillian Wright – Climate Change Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	Non-specific

Appendices Attached:

Appendix A – Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24

Appendix B – Summary of Climate Change Activity

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to set out the progress that has been made in delivering the Council's Climate Change Strategy and delivery plans in response to the declaration of a climate change emergency.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- Notes the progress to date
- Approves the recommended next steps

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24 (attached at Appendix A) describes delivery across all Council services throughout the year. Each service is responsible for initiatives within its own area. The Communities and Climate Change Service co-ordinates and supports the activities.
- 3.2 Section 8 of this reports highlights the progress that has been made with the actions agreed in the previous (2022/23) Climate Change Annual Report.
- 3.3 In response to workload demands, including the need for engagement, the Council has introduced a new post to support the work towards nature

recovery (biodiversity) and, more recently, created a new post to focus on the delivery of domestic energy initiatives.

- 3.4 There are a number of further actions that are proposed following the consideration of the Annual Report. These are summarised in Section 9 of this report.
- 3.5 Much has changed since the Climate Change Action Plans were first approved and, in that light, the Council's targets for both operational and district emissions, and the plans for meeting those targets, need to be reviewed. The need to review our approach has been identified internally by both elected members and officers, and particularly by the Climate Change Working Group, and was also a recommendation following the Council's Corporate Peer Challenge¹.
- 3.6 Section 10 of this report presents a pathway for reviewing both the strategy and targets.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports delivery of all aims of the Corporate Plan; the primary benefit is protecting and improving the environment (Aim 4) with all other aims co-benefiting through improved efficiencies, suitable built environments, health from adaptation, home improvements, air quality improvements and climate impacts.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 None identified

6. Implications

- 6.1 Community safety, including safeguarding and prevention of terrorism
No specific implications.
- 6.2 Workforce
Climate Change mitigation and adaptation initiatives cut across all services of the Council and each service is responsible for initiatives within their area.
- 6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment
The action to address the climate change emergency affects all of society, but its effects can have a disproportionate effect on certain, often vulnerable, groups. In such cases, such as energy efficiency, our work is targeted towards those with the highest risk and most need.

¹ www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/article/7329/Corporate-Peer-Challenge

6.4 Financial Considerations

The work to reduce the Council's own emissions is largely met from individual service budgets. The Council also seeks to take advantage of any national funding, such as those provided for improving energy efficiency and preparing for Biodiversity Net Gain.

6.5 Legal

There is no specific climate change duty, but the Council has a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021).

6.6 Climate Change and Sustainability

The Climate Change Plan has Sustainable Development Principles at its core and throughout, considering the environment, communities, and economy.

6.7 Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity

The Climate Change Plan includes action for nature recovery; however, this will be largely delivered and reported through the Council's Plan for Nature.

6.8 Consultation

The review of the Climate Change Plan and targets should have a public and partner exercise for consultation.

6.9 Risk Assessment

The risk to not delivering the plan is the ability for our communities to adapt to climate change impacts. Plans to assess the climate change impacts risk to the Council's operations and communities is planned as a new work strand.

The Council has agreed to take part in voluntary climate risk assessments through DEFRA.

ANDREW P STOKES
Chief Executive

Web Links and Background Papers

[SMDC Corporate Peer Challenge](#)

[Plan For Nature](#)

Contact details

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7. Introduction and Background

- 7.1 In 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency and pledged to work towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. Following this a significant amount of work was undertaken with a range of external partners and community groups in developing ambitious inward and outward facing action plans which were approved and adopted in 2021.
- 7.2 This Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24 is the third since the adoption of the Climate Change Action Plans. The aim of the report is to give an overview of activity, identify gaps, issues and opportunities, whilst recommending the next steps.

8. Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24

- 8.1 Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24 (attached at Appendix A) provides a detailed update on progress towards delivering the Council's climate change objectives during 2023/24. The Council's activities are structured under our '7 ways' (Appendix B provides a summary of the Council's work under these themes). The table below summarises progress on delivering the actions which were agreed following the 2022/23 annual report.

THE WAY WE LIVE	
ACTIONS FROM 2022/23 REPORT	PROGRESS DURING 2023/24
Use existing data to better target households which could benefit from existing and emerging schemes.	Beat the Cold have been commissioned to create a data package to support future targeted engagement.
Improving liaison with Your Housing as the main social housing provider in the Moorlands. Your Housing have a target to have all properties with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C or above by 2030.	Your Housing has presented to the Climate Change Working Group.
Working with the supply chain to support able and willing to pay households to access good advice, quality installations and finance arrangements and continue working with wider professional networks to learn of and apply good practice and innovative thinking. Officers completed a Local Government Association course on upscaling and delivering retrofit programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with High Peak gives us access to innovative projects. • HEAT HUB • Skills project to assess gaps and providers • Supply chain project • Beat the Cold offers - Home visits, advice events, collateral, communication plans • Retrofit training for officers • Domestic Energy officer in post from Sept 24
Continuing to enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency Scheme with private landlords.	This is ongoing work.
Setting out a comprehensive housing strategy and leave no one behind.	This is planned to be considered by Cabinet in Autumn 2024
Continuing to work with regional and national Government to lobby for additional support and funds and a national training programme.	We work with Midlands Net Zero Hub, the Local Authority Energy Partnership, UK 100, APSE, Local Government Association

THE WAY WE TRAVEL	
ACTIONS FROM 2022/23 REPORT	PROGRESS DURING 2023/24
Working with the County Council to deliver the best electric vehicle charging network possible for a pleasant user experience.	This is ongoing through the LEVI project plus the Council is supplementing with own chargers at Moorlands House
Continuing to monitor technology shifts for the fleet to demonstrate to other businesses and lead by example.	AES are working with partners to trail major fleet vehicles and fuel types. This will align with procurement strategies for fleet and design of a new depot.
Continuing to encourage active travel through engagement	Air Quality continues to work with schools, Move More is well established, parks spaces and walking festivals are all to support activity.
Continuing to raise awareness of air quality	Environmental Health continue to monitor and engage
Developing incentives for staff, councillors and partners to charge on site and access vehicles.	Chargers are approved at Moorlands House plus EV salary sacrifice scheme for staff is in place

THE WAY WE WORK	
ACTIONS FROM 2022/23 REPORT	PROGRESS DURING 2023/24
Deliver the new Asset Management Plan, embedding energy use and carbon emissions	The Asset Management Framework was agreed in 2023. Consideration is made to carbon and net zero.
Provide training to support the new sustainable procurement policy and means to monitor the success	Awaiting new legislation briefing to align.
Establish incentives for alternative travel for staff.	EV and bike salary sacrifice in place. Chargers installed at Moorlands House in progress. Working with Modeshift Stars to assess other options. IT places where appropriate for flexible working.
Provide electric vehicle charges at council offices	In progress
Continue to work with County and other partners	Ongoing
Collaborate on verge and management of green spaces	Green spaces Strategy has been agreed. Some trails on equipment have been carried out

THE WAY WE MAKE ENERGY	
ACTIONS FROM 2022/23 REPORT	PROGRESS DURING 2023/24
Embed renewables into Asset Management Plan for Council buildings	The Asset Management Framework was agreed in 2023. Consideration is made to carbon and net zero.
Embed renewables in supplementary planning guidance	This is in place with enhanced toolkit to be approved.
Assess and develop schemes for householders and business to encourage uptake.	Support community energy with one off fund This incentive is still nascent
Use funding streams in the Way We Live section to target small scale domestic PV at scale	Improved engagement and working with supply chain relating to grants

THE WAY WE LOOK AFTER OUR ENVIRONMENT	
ACTIONS FROM 2022/23 REPORT	PROGRESS DURING 2023/24
Adopt the Plan for Nature	Approved October 23
Set out priorities and actions from the plan and dedicate a resource to deliver it	Biodiversity officer plus working groups have set up mechanisms to establish these.
Scan for external funding for potential projects within the plan	Project list being is being developed Subscribed to Grantfinder. Relevant opportunities distributed to delivery partners. Already have a partnership with Nature in Your Neighbourhood.
Consider declaring a nature emergency	Approved April 24
Maintain oversight on the development on Biodiversity Net Gain legislation and systems	Planning and Biodiversity officer group set up
Continue to work with external groups and improve collaborative relationships	Local Nature Recovery Strategy Green Network Nature in your neighbourhood.
Continue communications on impact of wildfires	Ongoing
Maintain a Public Spaces Protection Order in high wildfire risk areas.	Introduced but now lapsed. Meetings are taking place to review its effect and overall approach to wildfires.

9. Next Steps

9.1 After reviewing progress made during 2023/24 it is recommended that the Council adopts the following priorities for action in 2024/25.

- Review the Climate Change Plan
- Review targets – operational and district

- Review performance indicators, data collection processes and frequencies, with a particular focus on methods for recording and reporting Councillor and Officer mileage.
- Start to risk assess climate impact on operations and communities
- Embed climate and nature considerations at the start of project/policy development scoping.
- Improve programme management across climate initiatives (as noted in the peer review)
- Use the report to create a suite of communication messages and tools to develop a plan with stakeholder assessment.
- Maintain Carbon Literacy Bronze Award with training for relevant staff, partners and members.
- Train relevant members and officers on Biodiversity Net Gain to understand new duties
- Consider climate in fleet procurement exercise
- Respond to new waste legislation
- Streamline ability to respond to opportunities whilst maintaining procedures and quality assurance
- Engage with new procurement rules and embed sustainable practice and policy.
- Consider the development of a Local Area Energy Plan
- Improve cross service working on housing initiatives and cost of living engagement
- Build on cross service working on nature improvements, project identification, funding, practices and monitoring.
- Scan for new and evolving legislation, opportunities or threats owing to new government policy
- Continue to widen community outreach and engagement, linking to other organisations

10. Review of Net Zero targets and Climate Change Plans

10.1 The following steps have been identified for reviewing and revising the current plan and targets.

ACTION	DATE
Separate policy and strategy from plan documents	End October 2024
Review and revise targets for operations and district	End January 2025
Agree revised targets	Cabinet 11th February 2025
Review action plans	End January 2025
HoS/Directors to develop the action pathways, monitoring and reporting framework	End January 2025
New Climate Change plan agreed with performance framework	14th May 2025