

**CABINET  
16 MARCH 2021**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2021 -2026**

REPORT OF THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

COUNCIL PRIORITY: RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This report proposes a refreshed Climate Change strategy for adoption for 2021-2026.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Cabinet adopt the following documents, taking into consideration the recommendation from the Cabinet Panel for the Environment to alter the target date for achieving Net Zero be brought forward from 2050 to 2040:

- Appendix 1 Climate Change Strategy 2021-2026
- Appendix A Proposed Actions
- Appendix B Achievements.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 In 2019, the Council passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency, in this motion the Council pledged their commitment to do everything within their power to make North Hertfordshire carbon zero by 2030. The revised strategy sets out how the council will do this. At the beginning of 2020, the Council adopted a revised strategy to reflect the undertaking of this motion and reflect the latest legislation and most pertinent international research regarding Climate Change.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 There are no alternative options to be considered.

## **5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1 The discussions at the Cabinet Panel for the Environment have been taken into consideration in the renewal of the Strategy. The Cabinet Panel for the Environment endorsed the Climate Change strategy and recommended that the target date for achieving Net Zero be brought forward from 2050 to 2040. As part of the approval of the Climate Change Strategy, the proposed and completed actions, contained within the appendices, have been agreed by the Leadership Team (comprising of Managing Director and Service Directors), Executive members and Public Liaison Board.

## **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 14 November 2020.

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 NHDC has held climate action as one of its long-term corporate priority areas. Following the passing of the Climate Change Emergency Motion in 2019, the Climate Change Strategy was updated. The Climate Change Strategy relates primarily to the reduction of carbon emissions but in conjunction with the Environment Panel and the Climate Change Implementation Group, the Council is enabled to address the full range of issues relating to climate change (both mitigation of and adaption to the effects of climate change) and environmental matters (such as biodiversity and waste) in North Hertfordshire. As such, this Strategy contains certain actions related to waste and biodiversity in so far as they relate to carbon and greenhouse gas reduction. With this mind, this Strategy will act as the overarching strategy from which other relevant policies/strategies will follow if required from various Council service areas.(for example the Electric Vehicle Strategy would sit in support of the umbrella Climate Change Strategy).
- 7.2 The Council are also pulling together an overarching programme entitled 'Sustainable North Hertfordshire'. This programme will seek to develop and support policies that encourage electric vehicle use (i.e. the Electric Vehicle Strategy) and other 'cleaner air' initiatives across the district, and these actions will support the Climate Change Strategy, which are listed in appendix A (Proposed Actions) under the 'Enabling Carbon Savings section (page 4).
- 7.3 The Council has considerable scope to both reduce carbon emissions, support a transition towards zero carbon and to enhance sustainability in new development across the district through its role as statutory local planning authority. This can be achieved through its role in plan and policymaking and in development management when determining planning applications.
- 7.4 The Council are also proposing the preparatory works on a revised and updated programme of Supplementary Planning documents - including a Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), a biodiversity SPD and Green Infrastructure Strategy as highlighted in the Local Plan Implementation report that will be presented to Cabinet alongside this report on the 16th March 2021.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The strategy outlines the international frameworks and agreements that informed the global response to Climate Change. In the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 special report on Global Warming it highlighted that any effort to limit global warming to 1.5°C as agreed in the Paris accord would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society and the declaration of a Climate Emergency. In tandem, the UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) similarly asserted in 2019, that Climate Change requires more ambitious reductions and radical actions by national government, local authorities, businesses, communities and individuals. The CCC concluded that if radical steps are taken the UK can end its contribution to global warming within 30 years. In line with this research, The Climate Change Act 2008 was amended in 2019 to introduce a target for a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment ) Order 2019 came into effect on June 2019. Additionally, in December 2020, the UK Prime Minister announced a new target to reduce the UK's emissions by at least 68% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.
- 8.2 In light of these national legislative changes the Climate Change strategy has been further refined to reflect the changes. The Objectives within the strategy have been amended to the following:

### Objectives

- Achieve Carbon Neutrality for the Council's own operations by 2030 (at least Scope 1 and Scope 2)<sup>i</sup>.
  - Ensure all operations and services are resilient to the impacts of climate change.
  - Achieve a Net Zero Carbon district by 2050.
  - Become a district that is resilient to unavoidable impacts of climate change.
- 8.3 The Strategic Priorities have also been refined to read as follows;
1. Taking Action – taking direct action to reduce the Council's carbon emissions.
  2. Enabling Carbon Savings – ensuring that our policies enable citizens and businesses to reduce their emissions.
  3. Inspiring the Community – encouraging citizens and businesses to take action to go further and faster in cutting carbon emissions.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Cabinet's Terms of Reference include at 5.6.1 the power 'to prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council'. The proposed actions at Appendix A are a continuation of the those already agreed as part of the adoption of the Council Plan 2021-2026. The strategic priorities for 2021-2026 will provide high level reference points to assist the Council making clear and effective decisions to reduce environmental impact.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 A number of the proposed actions detailed in Appendix A will require additional resource and costs to achieve. As part of the budget planning process it will be necessary to determine the ways that the actions can be achieved, and the costs involved. There is likely to be a need to prioritise the actions, in terms of the extent to which they can be delivered and the timing of delivery, to ensure that the overall programme is affordable within the resources that the Council has available. The budget for 2021/22 onwards sets a target for the delivery of net savings of £2m per year by the end of 2025/26. As this is a net target, this does allow for additional costs relating to new priorities but does require that these will increase the gross savings (efficiencies, income generation or service changes) that need to be delivered. Some of the proposed actions will involve capital expenditure. Whilst this will come from capital funding sources (including borrowing), this will also have revenue budget implications/ opportunity costs. Where the actions reduce the Council's energy usage then there will be reductions in ongoing energy costs. A business case will be required to assess the financial and environmental case. Where available the Council will look to access funding from other sources.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 If the Council fails to plan and respond to the potential negative impacts of Climate Change, there is a risk that Council services are not able to adapt or respond to changes linked to Climate Change. This could lead to Services becoming less resilient and becoming ineffective in responding to adverse weather conditions/events.
- 11.2 Following adoption of the Strategy, officers will review the current Risk Register entry entitled "Delivering the NHDC Climate Change Strategy 2020-25". The updated risk will reflect the risks and opportunities relating to the delivery of the revised strategic priorities and actions and to the achievement of the objectives specified. This will subsequently be referred to the Risk Management Group and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for further consideration.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. There are no direct negative impacts attached to this strategy. However further equality impact assessments may be undertaken for individual proposed projects.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this report.

## **14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 Each of the Proposed Actions will have an individual Environmental impact assessment completed as the projects come to fruition.

## **15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 A number of the proposed actions detailed in Appendix A will require additional staffing resource to achieve. They will have impacts across a number of teams including planning, estates, property services, leisure, waste, green space, parking and policy. Some of the work may be able to be incorporated in to existing and developing work plans, but it will mean that other activities will be deprioritised.

## **16. APPENDICES**

- 16.1 Appendix 1 – Climate Change Strategy 2021 - 26
- 16.2 Appendix A – Proposed actions
- 16.3 Appendix B - Achievements

## **17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 18.1 None

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<sup>i</sup> According to the Carbon Trust, *Scope 1* covers direct *emissions* from owned or controlled sources. *Scope 2* covers indirect *emissions* from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling consumed by the reporting company. *Scope 3* includes all other indirect *emissions* that occur in a company's value chain  
<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/briefing-what-are-scope-3-emissions>