

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 9 November 2023

Title: Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy - Annual update

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning

Cabinet member: Councillor Emily O'Brien, Cabinet member for Climate, Nature and Food Systems

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To provide an update on the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and action plan, and set out proposals for climate change activities in 2024/25, including refreshing the Strategy and action plan

Decision type: Key

Officer recommendation(s): Cabinet is recommended to:
(1) approve the Climate Change and Sustainability Annual Update (as attached in Appendix 1) for publication on the council's website.
(2) note progress to date on the Strategy and action plan, as set out in Appendix 1.
(3) delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Planning and Regeneration to deliver the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy refresh, in consultation with the portfolio holder.

Reasons for recommendations: To progress the aims of the council's Climate Emergency Declaration (2019) to make the authority net zero carbon by 2030 and to assist the same aim to be achieved within the wider district.

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1 Introduction

1.1 This paper sets out (through Appendix 1) the progress of the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and action plan, as approved by Cabinet in February 2021, as a result of the Climate Emergency Declaration made at Full Council in

July 2019. The Strategy sets out the vision for a net zero carbon council and district by 2030.

- 1.2 Appendix 1 has been brought forward for approval by Cabinet. The Appendix, tracking progress on actions set, will be placed as a standalone document on the council's climate change web page and will sit alongside the full Strategy.
- 1.3 The carbon emission report within Appendix 1 confirms a 16.8% reduction on the total baseline figure from 2018/19, and a 13.8% reduction in fleet emissions, confirming the council is on track in terms of the emissions commitments.
- 1.4 The carbon footprint of the district has reduced by 15% based on the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ – previously Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's – BEIS) data, since 2018.

No analysis is carried out on the district data and it is provided for monitoring purposes only this year. A more in-depth analysis of district and council emissions will be carried out in 2024/25. This should enable a review of the figures pre, during and post Covid-19 lockdowns due to the 2-year lag in the data.

- 1.5 Partnership working remains key to the success of any local authority's climate change and carbon reduction ambitions, and Lewes District Council places a particular importance on the value of partnership working.

The council has progressed many regional and local projects working with partners including:

- Decarbonising social housing roadmap for 2030 zero carbon with the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) and the University of Brighton.
- Continued support for Ouse Valley Climate Action project led by the South Downs National Park and a partnership of 10 local organisations including the council.
- Solar Together – photovoltaic (PV) panel and storage group buying scheme with over 220 acceptances and 42 installations across the district as of September 2023.

More details and case-studies can be found in the Appendix 1 below.

2 Lewes District Council Carbon Emission Report

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of the carbon report for the financial year 2022/23 along with a comparison with the baseline 2018/19.
- 2.2 There has been a reduction in the council's Scope 1 and 2 emissions of 16.8% since 2018/19.
- 2.3 The full report is available in Appendix 1.

3 Scope 3 emissions

- 3.1 The council continues to expand upon its Scope 3 emissions reporting. The council acknowledges that its greatest source of emissions will be from purchasing and contracting.

The councils reporting methods continue to improve as contracts renew. This year's report is contained within Table 3 of Appendix 1.

4 Lewes District Carbon Emissions Summary

- 4.1 This information can be found in Appendix 1.

5 The Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy – Strategic Action Areas Update

- 5.1 The Strategy currently contains 86 actions across 7 action areas. The scrutiny subgroup (called Scrutiny Emergency Climate Change Panel) of Policy and Performance Advisory Committee has helpfully identified challenges with the current framework for tracking progress, and these will be addressed as part of the refresh mentioned in recommendation 3 of this report.

A summary of work to date is below. 68% of actions are currently reported as green, 16% as amber, 0% red and 16% complete. Appendix 1 sets out the full updated action plan and set of indicators.

- 5.2 A number of key actions include:

- Expert input into Local Plan Evidence Base reports by specialist officers across the Green Consultancy.
- Allocation of 'Cost of Living Crisis' fund monies to fund green energy and energy saving initiatives.
- As of September 2023, 12 public electric vehicle (EV) charge points have been installed in 2 of the council's car parks. 52 EV charge points will be installed in the remaining 7 car parks by the new year, with an additional 3 EV charge points specifically for car club use.
- Electric food waste vehicles have been piloted and separate food waste collections are being rolled out over the autumn and winter.
- Solar Together communications generated 1,197 registrations and, as of September 2023, 42 residential solar systems had been installed.
- Natural Flood Management work through the high profile Cockshut Stream Restoration Project – success in flood management as well as biodiversity improvements and carbon capture, attracted local and national media interest, and there are already reported sightings of species not usually seen.
- 128 vouchers to help purchase reusable products due to a partnership with local company Cheeky Wipes have been issued.
- Publication of Decarbonising our Housing Stock – Roadmap for 2030 Zero Carbon.
- Carbon Literacy Project training (delivered by a local community energy organisation) was attended by 13 councillors.

- Provided supporting evidence and partnership working for the Lewes District Food Partnership Sustainable Food Places Bronze award application.
- Funding awarded to the council for a street gum removal and behaviour change campaign across the district.
- Ringmer Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems flood alleviation scheme is being delivered with partners and schools.

6 Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Refresh

6.1 The Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy is a robust and comprehensive document that reflects the vision and pathway for the council to reach its 2030 net zero ambition. The Strategy was published in 2021 and its development involved engagement with over 140 individuals and organisations throughout the district, reflected on global, national, regional, and local policy to develop an evidence base. Baseline figures for the district and the council were produced and 7 strategic action areas were identified. Periodic review and refresh is required, and this is being proposed to meet the following objectives:

- Ensure the Strategy remains live and dynamic.
- Incorporate updates to national, regional and local policy framework.
- Update organisation and government department names.
- Update and reflect the ongoing input and partnership working with the community in helping to deliver the council's net zeros goals.

6.2 Process Proposal

- In line with recommendation 3 of this report, Cabinet is recommended to approve delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Planning and regeneration, in consultation with the portfolio holder, to refresh the Strategy and corresponding action plan, in readiness for delivery and monitoring from the new financial year 2024/25.

6.3 Timeframe

- Announcement of Strategy refresh following cabinet approval.
- Strategy refresh to begin in November 2023.
- Action plan refresh, light touch refresh already underway and to be continued more vigorously from November 2023
- Community and stakeholder engagement ongoing throughout 2023/24.
- Refreshed Strategy and action plan to be delivered for monitoring by the Scrutiny Emergency Climate Change Panel from the new financial year.

7 Financial appraisal

7.1 The financial implications of the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and action plan will be factored into the 2024/25 budget setting process currently underway.

8 Legal implications

8.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 created a framework for reducing the UK's carbon emissions. It legally binds the government to carbon budgets that set limits on the UK's greenhouse gas emissions during five-year periods. They

include a target to be over three quarters of the way to net zero in the next 13 years. 'Net zero' means that the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK is equal to or lower than the amount of greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere in the UK. The UK has also committed internationally to reduce its emissions by at least 68% by 2030 from 1990 levels, as part of its 'Nationally Determined Contribution' (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.

- 8.2 In October 2021, BEIS issued The Net Zero Strategy, which sets out the government's policies and proposals to ensure the UK continues to meet its carbon budgets under the Climate Change Act 2008 and achieves its NDC under the Paris Agreement. It also sets out the government's vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050.
- 8.3 The Climate Change Act did not include a statutory duty for local authorities to develop plans and deliver cuts in line with its carbon budgets. Nor did it set local authorities their own carbon budgets. However, this does not preclude local authorities from developing their own climate change and sustainability plans to enhance environmental conditions across their own areas and to contribute to national efforts. The council has power to do this under its general power of competence conferred by sections 1 to 4 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 8.4 It is legitimate (indeed advisable) for the council to work with other local organisations on a partnership basis to advance its plans. Paragraph 1.5 above and Appendix 1 sets out examples of such support and collaboration.
- 8.5 Action to reduce carbon emissions across Lewes district is an executive function and proper for Cabinet to determine. Accordingly, Cabinet is the appropriate body to consider and approve the recommendations set out on page 1 of this report.
- Legal input provided 04.09.23 Legal ref: 012451-LDC-OD

9 Equality analysis

- 9.1 An Equality Analysis already exists for this topic: Cabinet paper February 2021: [Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy 2021](#)
- Further analysis is done on a project-by-project basis.

10 Environmental sustainability implications

- 10.1 The Strategy is key to delivering the net zero carbon goal of the council by 2030. It will seek to ensure that carbon implications are taken into account throughout the council and in all decisions.

Implementation of actions to achieve carbon neutrality is key to mitigate the predicted negative impacts of climate change on the environment, economy and communities.

11 Contribution to Community Wealth Building

- 11.1 The Community Wealth Building Strategy and action plan is a fundamental, enabling strand of the climate change action plan, and contributes considerably to the deliverability of the council's ambitions. Buying more locally, employing local staff, and encouraging local investment in our projects helps increase, and keep, wealth and jobs within our community whilst reducing carbon emissions.

12 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Lewes District Council Climate Change & Sustainability Update November 2023 – for publication on the website

13 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- Cabinet paper November 2022: [Climate Change and Sustainability Update 2022](#)