

Title: Climate Change and Biodiversity Reporting
 Lead Officer: Dave Barber
 Portfolio Holder: Ian Davison, Will Roberts, Lowell Williams
 Wards of the District directly affected: All

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder		Ian Davison (with Lowell Williams and Will Roberts)
Finance		
Legal Services		
Chief Executive		Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change		Author
Head of Service(s)		N/A
Section 151 Officer		Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer		Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group		N/A
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	No – Scrutiny Report only.	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

1. Summary Why Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for the report.

- 1.1 At its meeting on 6th February 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed its work programme. The work programme includes the consideration of a report relating to the Climate Change Action Programme and Biodiversity Action Programme and in particular proposals for reporting and scrutinizing 5 key themes relating to these programmes. This report sets out how and when those 5 key themes will be addressed.

2 What is being reviewed?

- 2.1 The 5 themes that the Committee has requested for future scrutiny are:
1. Offsetting and any potential for getting involved in early policy development.
 2. Issue of adaptation.
 3. Data tracking (including carbon emissions) and how this can be most efficient.
 4. Biodiversity Action Plan
 5. Residents Engagement & Communication
- 2.2 Taking each of these themes in turn the paragraphs below set out how and when each of these will be reported to the Committee.

Offsetting

- 2.3 When the Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019, it was agreed that the Council should seek to become a net-zero carbon organisation, including contracted out services, by 2025 in terms of scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. This was reiterated in November 2019 when the initial Climate Emergency Action Plan was agreed. However, the commitment at that time was predicated on being able to hold a Council Tax referendum in May 2020 to deliver the significant funding required to achieve this aim. In the event it was not possible to hold the referendum in 2020 and so a revised ambition and programme was agreed in 2021. The revised ambition (agreed in July 2021) read:

"Ambition 1 – Net Zero Carbon Council 2025: ensure the new South Warwickshire Council is net zero carbon within a year of its first elections and that services provided through contractors include carbon reduction targets to deliver net zero by 2030."

- 2.4 This is still one of the Council's stated Climate Change ambitions. To achieve the ambition of being "Net Zero" it is likely that some form of carbon offsetting will be required, albeit as a last resort. Initial discussions will be held with the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) Advisory Group to agree how off-setting work will be manifested to allow clear proposals to be formed.

Adaptation

- 2.5 Ambition 3 of the Council's Climate Change Action Programme is: "To enable our environment and communities to have adapted to the potential of at least 3 degrees rise in global temperatures by 2100."

- 2.6 A revised Climate Change Adaptation Plan was agreed by Cabinet in December 2023. This plan sets out the climate change adaptation actions that should be considered for implementation to ensure that our natural environment, people, buildings, and businesses are prepared for the impacts of climate change. It uses the findings from the West Midlands and Warwickshire County Council Adaptation Plans, along with the outcomes of CCRA3 and NAP3, to create a localised plan for Warwick District. It is primarily a document for Warwick District Council to use, focusing on actions within the Council's areas of influence and those actions it has direct control over. However, it does not discount partnership working to seek other opportunities for wider climate change adaptation.
- 2.7 Report April 2025: It is proposed to bring a report that may include: -
- 2.7.1 updated international, national, or local data that needs to be given consideration in reviewing our local Action Plan
 - 2.7.2 a short and accessible overview of the progress made on the Adaptation Action Plan.
 - 2.7.3 a more detail review of Theme 1 of the Action Plan (Mainstreaming climate resilience into Council operations/services)
 - 2.7.4 impacts and learning from recent extreme weather events to consider how services may need to further adapt. Extreme weather events will include:
 - a) Heatwave Summer 2022
 - b) Flooding January 2024
 - c) Any subsequent events

Data tracking (including carbon emissions)

- 2.8 At its meeting on 31st October 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported a set of measures to track data relating to the Climate Change Action Programme. It is noted that the Committees work programme in 2024 wishes to focus on Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy as this has been given particular emphasis in the Corporate Strategy. Reference should be made to the Cabinet Report entitled "Low-Cost Low Carbon Energy Programme." It is intended to develop a "Dashboard" to allow the data to be summarised in a visual way. It is therefore proposed that this is presented to the meeting on 24/09/24.
- 2.9 It should be noted that the climate change data presented to the Committee on 31/10/23, will be collated and will be reviewed regularly by the Climate Change Team, the relevant portfolio holders and, by exception, the Senior Leadership Team.

Biodiversity Action Programme

- 2.10 The Biodiversity Action Plan was agreed at Cabinet on 10th April 2024. The BAP includes an action plan through 2030 and a series of measures to enable progress to be checked.
- 2.11 It is proposed that the measures, along with a highlight and exceptions report on the actions, are presented to the Committee annually for scrutiny, with the first report being scheduled for April 2025 at the completion of the first year of the Action Plan.

Residents Engagement & Communication

- 2.12 Both the Climate Change Action Programme and the Biodiversity Action Programme incorporate communication and engagement strategies, with the latter Biodiversity Action Plan having a four monthly rolling communications plan which show progress and sets out what is planned next. Based on this, Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish for a report in January 2025 (and thereafter annually) summarising climate change and biodiversity engagement and communication activity, providing an assessment of the activities, and asking the Committee to consider potential activities for the year ahead.

3 The key risks to the service and how they are being managed

- 3.1 Risks are managed through the Service Area Risk Register and Project Risk Registers. It is suggested that drawing on existing risk register, a risk assessment is included within each of the reports proposed above. For this report, the risks identified below relate only to the risk involved with reporting in line with the proposals set out in section 2 above.
- 3.2 Offsetting: If offsetting is undertaken, there is a risk that it will be poor value for money and not benefit residents sufficiently. As described above, alternative approaches are being considered.
- 3.3 Data Tracking: Please see the Cabinet Report entitled "Low-Cost Low Carbon Energy Programme and appendices"
- 3.4 Biodiversity Action Plan: Risk that the data proves difficult to collate. The BAP is new and therefore much of the data has never been collected by WDC in the past. This is being mitigated through careful planning and coordination by an internal officer group.
- 3.5 Engagement and Consultation: If engagement is poor, then residents will be unsure of the value of our actions. Equally, consultations need to be high quality so that insights from residents and other stakeholders are adequately considered.

4 What is working well and what is not working so well.

- 4.1 This will be addressed when the reports detailed above are brought to future Committee meetings.

5 One Change to improve performance.

- 5.1 This will be addressed when the reports detailed above are brought to future Committee meetings.

Background papers:

Corporate Strategy – December 2023 [Corporate strategy - Warwick District Council.](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/cmis/Meeting-Dates)
([warwickdc.gov.uk](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk))

Climate Change Action Programme – December 2023
[cmis > Meeting Dates \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/cmis/Meeting-Dates) (Item 06)

Climate Adaptation Plan – December 2023
[Document.ashx \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/Document.ashx)

Biodiversity Action Programme – April 2024
[cmis > Meeting Dates \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/cmis/Meeting-Dates) (Item 06)

Low Cost, Low Carbon Energy Strategy – July 2024 [cmis > Meeting Dates \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/cmis/Meeting-Dates)