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|  <b>Executive – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015</b>   |   | <b>Agenda Item No.</b><br><b>9</b>      |
| <b>Title</b>  | Council’s Strategic Approach to Sustainability and Climate Change   |   |
| <b>For further information about this report please contact</b>   | Susan Smith<br>Sustainability and Climate Change Officer<br><a href="mailto:susan.smith@warwickdc.gov.uk">susan.smith@warwickdc.gov.uk</a><br>01926 456721  |   |
| <b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>  | All   |   |
| <b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?</b> | No  |   |
| <b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>   | 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2010 (Minute No. 177)  |   |
| <b>Background Papers</b>  | A Plan for Reducing Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Improving Energy Efficiency Across Warwick District (Encraft 2010)<br><br>Warwick District Council Climate Change Adaptation Study February 2011 (URSUS Consulting / Quantum, 2011)<br><br>Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Local Authority Own Estate and Operations: Warwick District Council 2012/2013 |   |
| <b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>  | No  |   |
| <b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>   | No  |   |
| <b>Key Decision?</b>  | No  |   |
| <b>Included within the Forward Plan?</b>  | Yes (Ref 551)   |   |
| <b>Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>  | No  |   |
| <b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>  |   |   |
| <b>Officer Approval</b>   | <b>Date</b>   | <b>Name</b>                             |
| Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive  | 11/12/2014  | Chris Elliot                            |
| Head of Service   | 10/12/2014  | Richard Hall                            |
| CMT   | 19/12/2014  | Chris Elliot / Andrew Jones / Bill Hunt |
| Section 151 Officer   | 11/12/2014  | Mike Snow                               |
| Monitoring Officer  | 10/12/2014  | Andrew Jones                            |
| Finance   | 11/12/2014  | Mike Snow                               |
| Portfolio Holder(s)   | 12/12/2014  | Cllr Michael Coker                      |
| <b>Consultation &amp; Community Engagement</b>  |   |   |
| n/a   |   |   |
| <b>Final Decision?</b>  | Yes   |   |
| <b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>  |   |   |

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed strategic approach to sustainability and climate change, in order to:
  - a. demonstrate how the sustainability objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy will be achieved; and,
  - b. ensure that the organisation and – in so far as this is under our influence - the wider District is able to effectively address the risks and opportunities presented by this agenda.

## 2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the strategic approach to sustainability outlined in Appendix A is adopted by the Council. It is envisaged that, whilst the strategic direction will be set, the action plan will require regular revision and updating to reflect changing circumstances.

## 3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 The sustainability and climate change agenda is complex and wide-ranging, and affects all service areas. An agreed corporate approach is therefore essential.
- 3.2 It is important to set a strategic framework for the Council to ensure that the aims and objectives of Council are met and that decisions on actions and expenditure are made on a reasoned basis.

## 4. **Policy Framework**

### 4.1 **Fit for the Future**

#### 4.1.1 **Sustainable Community Strategy**

These proposals are fully consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and will contribute to its delivery as follows:

- A commitment was made under the SCS to "bring forward a report on the Council's overall approach to sustainability, potential renewable energy and energy efficiency", which this report achieves.
- There is a clear linkage between the SCS' aims and priorities on *Sustainability*, and the objectives set out in the proposed strategic approach to sustainability and climate change, as shown in the table below:

| SCS Sustainability theme aim / priority   | Objectives detailed in proposed Strategic Approach to Sustainability and Climate Change                   |
|---|---|
| Minimise our use of natural resources and improve the energy and water efficiency of our buildings and operations | 2.1 Make our operational property holdings more efficient in the use of energy, water and other resources |
| Source as much of our energy as possible from renewable sources   | 2.3 Provide more energy from renewable and low-carbon sources   |

| SCS Sustainability theme aim / priority   | Objectives detailed in proposed Strategic Approach to Sustainability and Climate Change   |
|---|---|
| We will use our procurement processes to minimise energy use and CO <sub>2</sub> emissions  | 2.5 Ensure sustainability is fully integrated into procurement activities   |
| Ensure our services adapt and have greater resilience to the impacts of climate change  | 2.6 Ensure the Council's property and services remain resilient in the face of a changing climate   |
| To be a community leader by supporting and encouraging community and business-led initiatives to reduce energy use and to secure more renewable and low carbon energy | 3.2 Work proactively with community groups and the general public to promote and enable sustainability and climate change resilience in the district<br><br>3.3 Engage with local businesses to enable them to operate more sustainably and to create a thriving low-carbon economy |
| Understanding of climate change impacts will be taken into account in decision-making, policy development and significant operational initiatives                     | 1.1 Ensure the Council's strategies, policies and plans address relevant issues relating to sustainability and climate change   |

- The proposed strategy will contribute to meeting the *Economy, Skills and Employment* strategic priorities through Objective 3.3: "Engage with local businesses to enable them to operate more sustainably and to create a thriving low carbon economy";
- The *Health and Wellbeing* strategic priorities are supported through Objectives 2.4 and 3.4 of the proposed sustainability strategy. These objectives are concerned with the reduction of transport related emissions (including use of more sustainable travel modes such walking and cycling) and engaging with other public bodies, including those responsible for promoting health and wellbeing, to achieve joint aims; and,
- Under the *Housing* theme, the strategic priority to "Improve the standard of new and existing housing in order to build healthy, safe and strong communities" is closely aligned with Objective 2.2 of the proposed strategic approach to sustainability: "Make our housing stock more energy efficient", together with Objective 2.6: "Ensure the Council's property.... remains resilient in the face of a changing climate".

In all cases, the objectives set have an associated set of actions designed to ensure that they are met. As far as is possible these actions have measurable outcomes to enable their benefits to be quantified.

#### 4.1.2 **Service, People, Money**

The proposed strategic approach on sustainability aligns with the three strands of Fit for the Future as follows:

- Service – key objectives have been set based on engaging and proactively working with community groups, the general public, businesses and public bodies on issues relating to sustainability and climate change, representing an enhancement of our services;
- People (cultural change) – one of the aims of the proposed strategic approach is to embed sustainability within the organisation, which will involve ongoing awareness-raising and skills development for all staff and Elected Members, and will contribute to the organisation achieving and maintaining Investors in People status; and,
- Money – Objective 2.1 of the propose strategy is to “make our operational property holdings more efficient in the use of energy, water and other resources”. This is likely to result in cost savings, although these have still to be quantified.

#### 4.2 **Development Plan Documents**

The draft new Local Plan includes a suite of sustainability- and climate change-related policies, addressing issues such as renewable and low-carbon energy, energy efficiency, sustainability standards for buildings, flooding, water efficiency, green infrastructure and climate change adaptation.

The proposed strategic approach includes an objective to ensure the Council’s strategies, policies and plans address relevant issues relating to sustainability and climate change (Objective 1.1), and this is backed up with an action in the Action Plan to review and update as required the sustainability-related policies in the proposed new Local Plan, and produce a new sustainability supplementary planning document to provide guidance on how planning policies can be complied with.

### 5. **Budgetary Framework**

- 5.1 There are no direct budgetary implications arising out of this report. However, if and when projects arise as a result of implementing the strategy a business case for bringing them forward will be made.

There is currently an agreed £15,000 budget, which is matched funding towards an overall £45,000 Department of Energy & Climate Change project. This is for survey work to understand the potential for district heating schemes in our area.

Funding for the Sustainability / Climate Change Officer’s post was agreed from the Contingency Budget on a two year contract, running from April 2014.

### 6. **Risks**

- 6.1 The main risks of the proposals and their associated mitigation measures are shown in the table below:

| Risk  | Mitigation measure(s)   |
|---|---|
| The evidence / policies upon which the proposed strategy is based change, rendering the | Continually monitor and review the available evidence / policy context and, should a point be reached where it is |

| Risk   | Mitigation measure(s)  |
|--|--|
| strategy ineffective   | considered that the adopted approach is no longer appropriate, revise the strategy accordingly. In any case, it is proposed that the strategy is fully reviewed every three years  |
| The proposed actions do not achieve the intended outcomes  | Ensure that robust monitoring and measurement of all actions is put in place, and where appropriate, revise actions if the evidence demonstrates that the intended outcomes are unlikely to be achieved  |
| Lack of internal resource to carry out actions in plan   | The action plan presented is based on what can be realistically achieved based on current and likely future resourcing levels. However, proposals will be continually monitored and, should resourcing levels change such that their deliverability is affected, they will be reviewed and updated accordingly |
| Capital is spent investigating project feasibility but then projects are not subsequently implemented because they are deemed to be technically unfeasible or financially unviable | Each proposal requiring investment will be assessed in line with Council policy and procedure, and only those which are likely to succeed will be taken forward  |

However, in this case, it is considered that the risks associated with *not* adopting a strategic approach far outweigh those associated with the proposals themselves. These risks include:

- The aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy will not be met;
- The organisation will not adequately address the challenges / opportunities presented by issues relating sustainability and climate change;
- Actions are either not carried out at all, or are not prioritised in a strategic manner; and,
- Opportunities for investment, funding or cost avoidance are missed.

## **7. Alternative Option(s) considered**

- 7.1 The alternative to setting out a strategic approach would be to continue addressing sustainability and climate change in an ad hoc manner. However, making choices between different options is complex, and a strategic approach is therefore needed on which to base decisions.
- 7.2 The content of the strategy and the actions which result are a matter of choice for the organisation. What has been put forward is considered to be a balanced approach given the resources available.