

Title: Climate Change Ambitions for South Warwickshire

Lead Officer: Dave Barber

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Alan Rhead

Public/Confidential report: Public

Wards of the District directly affected: All

Contrary to the policy framework: No

Contrary to the budgetary framework:

Key Decision: Yes

Included within the Forward Plan: Yes

Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: Yes

Consultation & Community Engagement: Proposed by this report

Final Decision: No

Accessibility Checked: Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval

Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	15 June	Chris Elliott
Head of Service		N/A
CMT	15 June	Chris Elliott, Andy Jones, Dave Barber
Section 151 Officer	15 June	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	15 June	Andy Jones
Finance	15 June	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	17 June	Alan Rhead

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks agreement for joint climate change ambitions for the whole of South Warwickshire. The report refines Warwick District Council's existing climate change ambitions in light of the proposal to work more closely with Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) and the joint research in to carbon reduction pathways. It also proposes a new ambition is added in relation to adaptation for climate change. Finally, the report seeks agreement for a comprehensive response to the recommendations of the People's Inquiry in to climate change

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the shared ambitions for Warwick District Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council set out in Appendix 1 are adopted as the basis for developing resourced programme of work for South Warwickshire to address the declared climate emergency.
- 2.2. That the recommendations of the People's Inquiry in to Climate Change, as set out in Appendix 2 are noted and the response to each of these recommendations is agreed and, subject to being able to identify appropriate resources, are incorporated in to the programme of work to deliver the ambitions set out in Appendix 1.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 **Recommendation 2.1:** On declaring a Climate Emergency in June 2019, the Council set out two specific ambitions:
 - a) to become a net-zero organisation by 2025
 - b) to facilitate decarbonisation across the District so that total carbon emissions within Warwick District are as close to zero as possible
- 3.2 Subsequently the Climate Emergency Action Programme (CEAP) was agreed in February 2020 subject to holding a successful Council Tax referendum in May 2020. The CEAP reaffirmed these two ambitions.
- 3.3 Since then, there have been a number of developments that have given rise to the need to refine the ambitions as proposed in recommendation 1. These are:
 - a) the Council was unable to hold the referendum in May 2020. As a result, the CEAP, as set out, had no financial resources to enable its delivery. Although an interim CEAP was agreed in December 2020 and has been the focus of the Council's climate change work, the CEAP needs to be reviewed with realistic targets.
 - b) The Council has commissioned People's Inquiry into climate change and has received a report containing far reaching recommendations (see appendix 2). It provides important insights into the priorities that a cross section of local people in relation to climate change.
 - c) Along with SDC, the Council has commissioned a carbon reduction pathways study to help understand the extent to which carbon emissions

could be reduced across South Warwickshire in the context of a high ambition. This report suggests that a 55% reduction by 2030 (based on 2017 levels) is achievable. This study has helped to define and refine the meaning of “as close to zero as possible” as set out in the second of the two ambitions that were established at the time the Climate Emergency was declared.

d) The Council has made a commitment to work more closely with SDC with a view to a potential future merger of the Councils. As a result, it is now proposed that the organisational and geographical scope of the ambitions is revised to cover the activities of both SDC and WDC and to jointly cover the geographical area of South Warwickshire. In parallel with this report, SDC’s Cabinet will be considering the same ambitions at its meeting on 5th July.

- 3.4 Appendix 1 provides further details regarding the scope of the three ambitions, along with the data and justification for each ambitions. It also sets out the intention to prepare a resourced Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) which will focus on the adopted ambitions. The CCAP will identify key actions and the initial resources required to make progress towards each of the ambitions, as well longer term areas of focus. Appendix 1, sets out the range of actions that will need to be explored and in doing so draws on both the Anthesis report and the People’s Inquiry recommendations.
- 3.5 **Recommendation 2.2:** The Council commissioned a People’s Inquiry into climate change in the summer of 2020. This involved a cross section of 30 local residents meeting over 10 sessions between October 2020 and early February 2021 to consider the question: “*What do we need to do in Warwick District to help address Climate Change by 2030?*”.
- 3.6 The Inquiry launched its recommendations in March 2021. It made 36 recommendations many of which are directly relevant to the Council’s work, but many of which also relate to the Council’s partners, businesses and communities. In launching the People’s Inquiry, the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Environment made a commitment “to using these findings to inform its Climate Emergency Action Plan for the period from 2021 to 2025. The Council is expecting to adopt this Action Plan in 2021 and will include as many of the People’s Inquiry recommendations as it can. Where it is not possible or appropriate for the Council to adopt any of the recommendations, it will explain why.”
- 3.7 Since March, the Climate Emergency Programme Advisory Board (CEPAB) has met three times to advise on how we should respond to the recommendations. In addition, each Head of Service has considered the recommendations that are relevant to the scope of their service. The responses set out in Appendix 2 reflect the advice of the CEPAB and the considerations of the Heads of Service.
- 3.8 The responses will be incorporated in to the South Warwickshire Climate Change Action Programme (CCAP) to be brought forward later in 2021. Whilst a number of recommendations can be actioned fairly quickly within existing resources, there are also recommendations that are supported but

which will require significant staff or financial resources. This will require careful prioritisation so that available resources focus on these areas where we can have the biggest impact most quickly. On the other-hand that means that some recommendations will not be delivered until later in the Programme as and when resources become available to do so.

4. Policy Framework

4.1. Fit for the Future (FFF)

4.1.1. The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report shows the way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council's Key projects.

4.1.2. The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the Council's website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

4.2. FFF Strands

4.2.1 External impacts of proposal(s)

People - Health, Homes, Communities – The response to the climate emergency will require ongoing involvement from local communities. As part of this, the CCAP will building on the People's Inquiry by incorporating proposals for ongoing community engagement around the climate change. The proposals will support the development of high quality homes and will help to address health issues associated with a changing climate by bringing a fresh focus on adaptation measures.

Services - Green, Clean, Safe – The proposals set out in this report seek to provide a robust framework for minimizing carbon ambitions across south Warwickshire thereby mitigating climate change

Money - Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment – Achieving the climate change ambitions will require new low carbon infrastructure, investment from a wide range of source and a focus on the green economy. This is an area that will continuously evolve, but will be an important part of the CCAP

4.2.2. Internal impacts of the proposal(s)

People - Effective Staff – Having clear and tangible climate change ambitions will enable staff to focus on how their work impacts on climate change. We will need to support staff to build awareness and develop new expertise to support the delivery of the corporate climate change ambitions.

Services - Maintain or Improve Services – The responses to the People's Inquiry recommendations have involved all heads of Service and as such a consideration of the impact on existing services has been incorporated. This

has shown that by adapting some existing services we can achieve service improvements as well as our climate change ambitions. In other cases, there is tension between resource existing service delivery and achieving our climate ambitions that will need to be resolved through the CCAP.

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term – The CCAP will set out how the existing Climate Action Fund will be utilised over the next 3 years. Any other funding required beyond that will either need to be derived from external sources or will need to be considered as part of future budget setting priorities.

4.3. **Supporting Strategies**

- 4.3.1. Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies and the relevant ones for this proposal are explained here.
- 4.3.2. This report refines the ambitions set out in the Climate Emergency Action Programme to reflect the changing circumstances set out in paragraph 3.3 above.

4.4. **Changes to Existing Policies**

- 4.4.1. This report does not change existing policies. However, it does refine and clarify the Council's stated Climate Change ambitions and adds a new ambition in relation to adaptation to climate change.

5. **Budgetary Framework**

- 5.1 There are no direct budgetary implications associated with this report. The Council has already established a Climate Action Fund of £500,000 per annum. This report will help inform how this budget is utilised, details of which will be brought forward in the CCAP later in 2021.

6. **Risks**

- 6.1 Given the level of uncertainty about the context for the Council's work on climate change, there is a significant risk that the ambitions as set out will prove not be achievable. This will not only give rise to reputational risks, but more importantly will lead to risks that the extent and impact of climate change will be greater. To mitigate this risk, the Council will continue to lobby national government and other organisations to address the barriers which are likely to prevent the extent of progress set out in our ambitions. This lobbying role will be reflected in the CCAP. In addition, the "statement of intent" set out in Appendix 1 underlines the need to consistently prioritise the climate emergency when we make decisions and allocate resources. Without this consistent prioritisation, the risk that the ambitions will not be achieved will increase, and the associated reputational consequences will also increase.
- 6.2 A further risk is that the People's Inquiry recommendations cannot be delivered as intended. These recommendations will, as far as possible, be incorporated in to the CCAP, but until the detailed work on prioritising and resourcing this has been completed, it is not possible to know which of the

recommendations can be delivered early and which will need to await future funding opportunities.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1. The Council could choose to continue with the existing climate change ambitions as the basis for refreshing the Climate Change Action Programme. This option is not recommended as it fails to take account of the changing circumstances set out in paragraph 3.3. In particular, this would limit the Council's ability to move forward jointly with SDC on the climate emergency response.
- 7.2. The Council could choose to set its ambitions within each of the three elements at a different level (either more ambitious or less ambitious). This is not recommended as the level of ambitions set out in recommendation 1 has involved extensive discussions with Stratford-on Avon District Council and reflects a joint position that both Councils may be willing to support. To move away from this position will potentially undermine the ability to reach a joint position. Further, the evidence set out in Appendix 1 shows that the ambitions are both stretching and realistic in the current context.
- 7.3. The Council could choose a different response to any of the People's Inquiry recommendations. However, this has not been recommended as the responses set out in appendix 2 reflect the feedback from the CEPAB and from Heads of Service.