

## **LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**16 MARCH 2021**

### **CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide an update to Members on the progress of the Climate Emergency Strategy and associated Action Plan.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 Newark and Sherwood District Council declared a Climate Emergency at the Full Council meeting of 16 July 2019. The declaration did not include a date for net zero for the Council but recognised the UK Government had, the preceding month, agreed a target date of 2050.
- 2.2 The Carbon Trust were appointed to work alongside officers and members to develop a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. The Climate Emergency Working Group (CEWG) met on several occasions to review the data and findings from The Carbon Trust, as well as to seek out views from partners, businesses and local groups. The CEWG comprised the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokespersons of the Policy & Finance, Leisure & Environment, Economic Development, and Homes & Communities Committees. Members of the working group recommended the carbon net neutral target date of 2035 and the emissions reduction target which were recommended to Policy and Finance Committee in September 2020 and approved by Full Council in December of the same year.
- 2.3 The Council's agreed target for reduction is 2,165 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (gas and fuel consumption from scope 1, purchased electricity from scope 2, and waste and water from scope 3).
- 2.4 The Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan is now being progressed, whilst an annual report will be presented to Policy and Finance Committee every September. However, a number of projects are now underway and it is deemed appropriate to update members on those.

#### **3.0 Project Update**

##### **3.1 Solar PV feasibility**

- 3.1.1 A tender document is being written to seek external support in looking at the rollout of photovoltaics on Council buildings. One of the principal sources of the Council's carbon footprint comes from its estate and this work will help the Council to understand the capital costs, payback and carbon reduction impact from generating energy through sustainable sources. Leisure Centres in particular, which are within the suite of responsibilities for Leisure and Environment Committee, are the principle emitters in the Council's estate given their high energy needs. However, the feasibility will go beyond just the leisure centres and look at a range of buildings, including the Brunel Drive Depot, National Civil War Centre and Palace Theatre, the Newark Beacon and The Buttermarket

amongst others. An assessment of the intricacies involved in expanding the current solar PV installation on Castle House will also be carried out.

3.1.2 Newark and Sherwood District Council are currently in the process of producing tender documents in corporation with Welland Procurement to enable prospective suppliers to provide a comprehensive analysis of solar PV on Newark and Sherwood District Council buildings. This will involve building a solution which works for the Council and providing various options such as battery storage and quality of panels.

3.1.3 A business case will be developed from the outcome of the tender process. By investing in feasibility studies it enables Newark and Sherwood District Council to create workable and 'shovel ready' projects should funding opportunities become available.

## 3.2 Green Energy

3.2.1 The Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan sets out a variety of carbon saving projects for Newark and Sherwood District Council to consider for implementation. The Council's carbon footprint is calculated within the climate strategy. The Council's target for reduction is 2,165 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (gas and fuel consumption from scope 1, purchased electricity from scope 2, and waste and water from scope 3). The majority of the Council's emissions are associated with the use of electricity, the use of gas as well as fleet transport emissions.

3.2.2 The Council is investigating the possible procurement of green energy or energy that comes from renewable sources. This will enable the Council to use reduced carbon factors for calculating carbon used from electricity emissions by obtaining Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) from the energy supplier. REGO certificates are issued for every megawatt hour (MWh) of eligible renewable output to generators of renewable electricity and can be sold to suppliers as a guarantee of energy being generated from a renewable source. Newark and Sherwood District Council can purchase these REGOs from the supplier for a premium. The benefit is that the Council's carbon emissions may be reduced by using a reduced carbon factor.

3.2.3 Green electricity can be procured through a range of sources which include Solar, Wind, Hydro and Biogas. Green gas is procured through Biogas only; this is similar to REGOs for electricity, the Council can purchase renewable gas from the energy supplier, this comes in the form of Biogas. Biogas will produce carbon dioxide, but is considered to be carbon neutral as the biogas comes from plant matter that draws carbon from atmospheric carbon dioxide. The cost of Biogas is more volatile than the cost of REGOs.

3.2.4 The purchase of green energy tariffs was recommended by the Carbon Trust to assist Newark and Sherwood District Council in the reduction of our carbon footprint. This will enable to substantial reduction in our carbon emissions, the carbon factor of the REGOs will differ on an annual basis however, how REGOs will (or will not) be used in reaching the government target of Carbon Net Zero has not yet been decided. The Cabinet Office, BEIS and Treasury are currently working on the strategy for achieving Carbon Net Zero.

3.2.5 The procurement of green energy would also include our leisure centres run by Active4Today as it is essential to incorporate our leisure centres in the procurement

of green energy. Active4Today procure energy as a separate entity. A separate piece of work is currently ongoing to create a collaborative approach for the purchase of green energy for Newark and Sherwood District Council's corporate and leisure buildings.

3.2.6 A further report for decision regarding the green energy fuel mix sources available, the financial element associated with the procurement of green energy tariffs and the incorporation of leisure centres within the procurement framework will be developed and presented to a future committee meeting.

### 3.3 Data Validation

3.3.1 Another recommendation from the Greening Newark and Sherwood Action plan is to improve the Councils data collection processes. An internal audit of the Councils current method of energy data collection and how data is validated has taken place. How this is carried out in the future is essential for carbon management and an accurate calculation of the Councils carbon footprint. The process has highlighted the importance of improving data collection and collation for the Council's ongoing response to the climate emergency.

3.3.2 There is currently an ongoing project to implement a defined process for energy management and utility data collection, the new process involves the enhancement of current methods and the introduction of new stages involving the development of a spreadsheet considering seasonal variations in energy and water consumption. It is proposed that energy databases will also be utilised to ensure accurate energy billing. This new proposed process is currently under review by the relevant Business Managers for consideration and approval.

## 4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 There are no equalities implications envisaged within the solar PV feasibility, green energy procurement and data validation project.

## 5.0 Digital Implications

5.1 Whilst there has been no digital implications identified there may be associated software requirements once feasibility studies have been completed and have been further explored by Newark and Sherwood District Council. The implications shall be considered as deemed appropriate. Furthermore, the ICT & Digital Services team will work to with the Environmental Policy and Projects Officer to reduce the technology carbon footprint for Newark and Sherwood.

## 6.0 Financial Implications (FIN20-21/924)

6.1 There is budget provision in the Capital Programme for work to be carried out as part of the plan to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. The Solar PV work will be carried out using this budget. As per Policy and Finance Committee on 24 September 2020, £40,000 has also been set aside in the Capital Projects Feasibility Reserve for future feasibility work and this along with the capital budget will be under regular review to ensure it remains sufficient.

6.2 The adoption of Green Energy Tariffs across the Authority will require further investigation and potential investment. This will be scoped and the cost determined; a report will be prepared for review.

## **7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

7.1 These projects align with the Council’s Community Plan objective to “Enhance and protect the district’s natural environment”. There is a specific activity under this objective to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by implementing an environmental strategy and carbon reduction action plan to achieve carbon neutrality. However, the Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan can also be considered to touch upon all objectives.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

**(a) the Project update be noted; and**

**(b) a further report be submitted to the Committee providing further progress updates on Newark and Sherwood District Council’s carbon reduction journey;**

## **Reason for Recommendations**

**To provide an update to Committee on project progress.**

**To ensure there is engagement at committee level with the climate emergency progress**

## **Background Papers**

26 September 2020 – Policy and Finance Committee

15 December 2020 – Full Council

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