



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 19 September 2023

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Paul Peacock - Strategy Performance & Finance
Councillor Keith Melton - Climate Change

Director Lead: Matthew Finch, Director - Communities & Environment

Lead Officer: Stephen Young, Decarbonisation Project Surveyor, Ext. 5440

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Key Decision
Report Title	Plans to Decarbonise the Council's Estate
Purpose of Report	To provide the Cabinet with an update on plans to appoint consultants to develop a decarbonisation plan for the Council's buildings in line with the Council's Community Plan objectives and stated plan to be net carbon neutral by 2035. To agree a budget to fund the work.
Report Recommendations	That Cabinet approve a budget of £150,780 from the Change Management Reserve to fund this work.
Alternative Options Considered	The Council has a target of being net carbon neutral, excluding housing, by 2035. The two main sources of carbon within the Council's footprint are its fleet and its buildings. Doing nothing is therefore not deemed a viable alternative to deliver carbon savings within the Council's estate, whilst the expertise and capacity to deliver this work in-house is not currently available.
Reason for Recommendations	To enable a programme of decarbonisation activities in line with the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan for a carbon net neutral target date of 2035.

1.0 Background

1.1 NSDC declared a Climate Emergency at the Full Council meeting on 16 July 2019. Following the declaration, the Carbon Trust were appointed to work alongside officers and members to develop a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. A carbon net neutral target date of 2035, and an emissions reduction target, were developed in line with this aspiration. The Climate Emergency Strategy and both targets were approved by Policy and Finance Committee in September 2020 and Full Council in December 2020.

- 1.2 The Council's agreed target for reduction is 2,165 tCO₂e.
- 1.3 Underpinning that aspiration, a Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan was developed to deliver the target set out in Climate Emergency Strategy. It outlines recommended carbon reduction initiatives which the council can undertake to improve energy efficiency and reduce our overall carbon footprint.
- 1.4 Within the Council's carbon footprint, there are two principal sources of emissions – the fleet and the Council's buildings. Work is underway to understand how the Council's depot at Brunel Drive may need to be developed into the future to support low emission vehicles and there are now two electric vehicles operating within the Council as a part of a small-scale pilot.
- 1.5 Five buildings have also been identified for photovoltaic panels to be fitted, in addition to those already in situ on the Council's main office, Castle House. Those additional sites are the Newark Sports and Fitness Centre, the Dukeries Leisure Centre, the Beacon Business Innovation Centre and the Green Flag parks of Sconce and Devon and Vicar Water.
- 1.6 However, there are clearly many more buildings in the Council's estate that PV is not suitable for, or is only one part of a whole building approach to reducing carbon. With that in mind, the Council is seeking expert support to draw up a decarbonisation plan for the wider estate.
- 1.7 The following sites have been approved for the decarbonisation plan:
 - Newark Sports and Fitness Centre
 - Dukeries Leisure Centre
 - Blidworth Leisure Centre
 - Newark Beacon
 - Castle House Offices
 - Brunel Drive Depot
 - National Civil War Centre
 - Palace Theatre
 - Vicar Water Visitor Centre
 - Sconce and Devon Visitor Centre
 - Sherwood Arts and Crafts Centre
 - Farrar Close – Stores + Offices
 - 19 Carparks throughout the district
- 1.8 The Council recently approached the market to identify suitably qualified and experienced consultants to undertake this work. This will give the Council a detailed profile including the required recommendations to decarbonise, reducing the carbon footprint and total energy usage and, ultimately, to achieve net zero by the 2035 deadline.

2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered

- 2.1 Following a tender process over the summer of 2023, the preferred tender bid is for a value of £150,780.

- 2.2 Surveys would commence immediately after Cabinet approval of budget, with a completion date in late Autumn 2023.
- 2.3 Costings for the required works will also be produced within the report for future funding requests. Government funding rounds do become available, but on a competitive basis and it is imperative that the Council has ready made schemes it can submit if it is to be successful.

Scope

- 2.4 The purpose of the development of the Decarbonisation Plan is also to determine how and when carbon reduction measures should be put in place e.g. the replacement of fossil fuel reliant heating systems with low carbon alternatives.

“The Decarbonisation Plan” works has 3 key elements;

- 2.5 To establish and describe the current state of NSDC’s sites with detailed survey information including:
- Digital surveys in CAD format
 - Detailed assessment of the current building fabric (insulation/U-Values, Windows and doors, BR Part L1A Airtightness etc)
 - Detailed assessment of the existing MEP systems
 - Infrastructure audit
- b. Establish a baseline in terms of energy use to provide the background on the condition and energy consumption of the buildings.
- c. Outline energy efficiency projects and existing low carbon heating technology in place.
- 2.6 Analysis of each site considering for each the possible decarbonisation measures, the costs, product lifetime, payback periods, intended outcomes and carbon savings.

Note: it is crucial to emphasise that this will not be a one size fits all strategy. Each building/site will need to be carefully surveyed, modelled and an on-off decarbonisation plan developed for each individual site.

- 2.7 The final output is an action plan detailing the prioritised recommended actions for each site. This will:
- a. Identify carbon saving/ decarbonisation works required to meet our 2035 net zero target.
 - b. Recommendations for energy efficiency/ decarbonisation works considering timescales, planning constraints, payback, and costs with consideration to electricity loading capacity and any future changes to load capacity.
 - c. Identification of key challenges; consideration for risks associated with implementing recommended improvements and identify any issues that may limit the recommended action performance, whether these issues are technical, financial, or logistical in nature.

With this information at hand, we will be able to provide Members with proposed future schemes to adapt and improve our buildings and carparks in order to achieve our pledge of net zero.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment below where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN23-24/7483)

- 3.1 The works proposed in section 2.0 are feasibility works and therefore will be revenue expenditure. The £150,780 will need to be funded from the Change Management Reserve.
- 3.2 Any works are that approved to be taken forward as a result of the feasibility study will need to be added to the Capital Programme.

Legal Implications (SLB 01/09/2023)

- 3.3 This Key Decision was added to the Forward Plan on 5 September 2023. Therefore, the required 28 clear days' notice has not been given. The Council's Monitoring Officer has informed the Chair of the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee, in accordance with the procedure for taking urgent decisions (paragraph 3.1 of Part D – Section 6 – Procedure for Taking Urgent Decisions of the Constitution refers).
- 3.4 The Chairman of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee indicated his support to consider the report at this meeting of the Cabinet in order to get started with the project.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.