

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 18 March 2020
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Report title	Our Climate Commitment	
Decision designation	RED	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Steve Evans City Environment	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Ross Cook, Director of City Environment	
Originating service	City Environment	
Accountable employee	Colin Parr Tel Email	Head of Business Services 01902 550105 colin.parr@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board	2 March 2020

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet recommends that Council:

1. Approves the Our Climate Commitment document, as attached at Appendix 1 following consultation.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. Progress to date in reducing the carbon footprint of the City of Wolverhampton Council from 28,500 tCO₂ in 2012-2013 to 16,000 tCO₂ on 2018-2019, a reduction of 45%.

2. The change in how the City of Wolverhampton Council procures its energy will remove a further 50% from its carbon footprint in 2020-2021.
3. That consultation has taken place on the Our Climate Commitment document including holding a Citizens Assembly, engaging with #OneGreenGov and Sustainability West Midlands which has helped shape and develop our final document.
4. That the Cabinet will receive a further report in the new municipal year highlighting the actions required to meet the aspirations detailed in Our Climate Commitment.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This paper outlines the progress made around Climate Change since the declaration of a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and provides an update on the consultation on Our Climate Commitment, including the Citizens Assembly.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change produced the Paris Agreements that resolved to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Following the agreement, in October 2018, the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change produced a special report highlighting that a limit to 1.5°C of warming would "require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society."
- 2.2 The report demonstrated that many of the adverse impacts of Climate Change would come after 1.5°C of warming. For example, with 1.5°C of global warming the Arctic is predicted to experience an ice-free summer once every 100 years, but with 2°C of warming, ice-free summers would occur once every 10 years. With business as usual, the world is predicted to be on track for warming of 3.2°C by 2100.
- 2.3 The negative impacts of Climate Change are already being experienced across the globe. The scientific community is now in agreement that Cyclone Idai – which ravaged south eastern Africa in early 2019 – was made far worse due to the prior impacts of Climate Change in the region. More recently, scientist have stated that the bushfires in Australia, though a natural event, had heightened destructive impact due to temperatures running 1°C warmer than the long-term average.
- 2.4 Government forecasts predict that climate change threatens £130 billion of UK infrastructure due to the impact of rising sea levels. Flooding is also expected to increase significantly with 1 in a 100 year floods occurring more regularly.
- 2.5 Wolverhampton and the West Midlands have recently experienced adverse climate conditions from the recent storms. It is predicted by scientists that Storm Dennis and its like will become a more regular part of the experience of Wolverhampton's residents as Climate Change accelerates.
- 2.6 It is for all these reasons that the Council thought it both appropriate and necessary to declare a 'Climate Emergency' in 2019 and take greater action.

3.0 Progress to date

- 3.1 On 17 July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency. As part of this declaration, the Council committed to making its activities net zero carbon by 2028 and to support partners in the city to achieve a similar aspiration within a similar timescale. There have been previous initiatives to promote sustainability and action on climate change within the Council, but following the declaration of the Climate Emergency and increased public awareness and engagement much more activity is planned.

3.2 Since July 2019, there has already been significant progress with several areas supporting the Council's journey to net zero by 2028.

- Purchasing all the Council's electricity from carbon neutral sources reducing council's direct carbon emissions by 50%.
- Installing on street vehicle charging infrastructure in the City Centre, with further installations in Bilston, Tettenhall and Wednesfield scheduled for January 2020
- Working with the BEIS funded Midlands Energy Hub to develop Bowman's Harbour into a 6.9 MWp solar farm; delivering clean, green, life-saving energy to our NHS colleagues working at New Cross hospital.
- Completion of a technical feasibility assessment of our Energy from Waste plant identifying potential additional capacity and district heating output opportunities
- Establishment of Strategic Climate Emergency Steering Group composed of councillors and senior officers.
- Establishment of a Climate Emergency Working Group with representatives from all Council directorates
- Creation of a Councillor Champion for Climate Change
- Development of a draft Climate Action Plan covering all Council portfolios and directorates which will support in the delivery of actions. This will be presented to Cabinet for approval in the new municipal year.

4.0 Our Climate Commitment

4.1 Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency, the Council drafted Our Climate Commitment. This public document sets the narrative for the Council's past, current and future work in tackling Climate Change. It provides high level detail around the impacts of Climate Change before detailing how the Council has addressed Climate Change and sustainability in the past. It then discusses the current context of Climate Change within the Council and Wolverhampton before highlighting the overarching actions the council plans to take.

4.2 This document along with the Council's wider work around the Climate Emergency was consulted on with the public from 8 January to 28 February 2020. Over this time, the consultation engaged with over 1,000 through the website, social media and community meetings. Following consultation, the document has been revised. The commitments page within the document, which set out high level actions to take forward, has been altered to reflect feedback from the consultation process and the views of the Citizens Assembly.

4.3 The consultation on Our Climate Commitment sought views on the regional target proposed by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) of net carbon zero by 2041. 74% of responses were in agreement with this proposed regional target. As such, Our Climate Commitment has been revised to welcome an initial city-wide target which is consistent with this regional target (see section 6 of this report). Our Climate Commitment has also been revised to provide the breakdown of the city's carbon footprint as a whole.

5.0 Consultation process and responses

5.1 As detailed in 4.2 the City of Wolverhampton Council consulted with the public on its work around the Climate Emergency. Sustainability West Midlands' guidance was used to develop an independent consultation survey. This consultation was launched in early January and was publicised widely on social media, local news and at several consultation events engaging over 1,000 people. The consultation was also advertised on VMS digital traffic management boards, a first for the city. In total, the survey had 622 responses. The response from this consultation survey can be seen in Appendix 2.

5.2 The consultation also involved several other formats.

- Sustainability West Midlands, a non-profit, regional environment consultancy, undertook a review of the Council's work around the Climate Emergency. They commended the Council on its progress and produced a series of recommendations to further improve the ongoing work.
- The Councillor Champion for Climate Change presented to Penn Climate Change Group discussing the Council's work and presenting the consultation to the group.
- The Director of City Environment highlighted the Council's work around the Climate Emergency at the Head Teacher's Briefing and invited schools to respond to the consultation.
- On January 22, Wolverhampton for Everyone launched its own #OneGreenGov event to enable members of the public and council to present solutions to help tackle Climate Change and improve sustainability within the city. This event happened in conjunction with similar events across the globe. All attendees were invited to respond to the consultation survey.
- A representative from the Climate Emergency Working Group presented to the Youth Council showcasing the initial actions from the Future Generations: Our Climate Commitments document. Members of the Youth Council commented on the actions and suggested their own actions that the Council should take forward.
- The organisation Woman of Wolverhampton held a dedicated session to respond to the consultation.

- In February, a Citizens Assembly was held enabling members of the public to submit recommendations to the Council. The Citizens Assembly were provided with information around the Council's initial actions, and were also shown the actions that came out of the Youth Council and #OneGreenGov event.

5.3 Following consultation, several recommended changes to the 'Future Generations: Our Climate Commitments' and Climate Action Plan have been raised. These are as follows.

- The public want clearer analysis on what led to the 45% reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.
- The public want clearer analysis on what influence the Council has over the city's carbon footprint, and how it will support wider change.
- The public want clearer analysis on how the work around Climate Change will be funded.
- Sustainability West Midlands and the public believes the document needs to provide greater clarity on the role of the Council's third party organisations.
- Public want greater transparency of progress made on climate actions
- Further education is needed for the public on what causes climate change.

5.4 Listed below are the actions that were raised by Sustainability West Midlands, the Youth Council and at other consultation events.

- Schools need to be empowered to reduce their carbon footprint, recycle and become more sustainable.
- A city wide forum should be set up bringing together business, community groups and public around the Climate Change agenda.
- Businesses should be incentivised to become greener through financial incentives e.g. reduced business rates, reduced energy cost.

6.0 Regional Position

6.1 From December 2019 to January 2020, Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) conducted an independent review of the draft council climate change commitments and action plan. One recommendation was that as the Council's operations only contribute to 1.25% of the carbon emissions within the Wolverhampton area, a target should also be set for the whole city.

6.2 SWM recommended using the wider target agreed by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area, which included the Wolverhampton area. This target was for net-zero emissions no later than 2041, with interim targets based on a 2018 baseline of 36% reduction by 2022, and 69% reduction by 2027, which was linked to an overall carbon budget of how much could be used before the net zero deadline. This is the recommended minimum target to meet the area contribution to the international Paris agreement.

- 6.3 The supporting evidence for the target was developed for the WMCA using evidence from the Tyndall Centre on how to translate the new UK national target of net zero by 2050 to the sub-national level such as combined authorities and local authorities. The reason the sub-national target is earlier is because it does not cover certain policy areas that are measured and influenced nationally such as aviation and shipping. Other exclusions include imported goods, the role of land use and forestry change, and other none CO2 greenhouse gases. However, the 2041 target is still challenging as it requires around a 13% annual reduction, more than three times the annual rate that is occurring currently locally.
- 6.4 Wolverhampton and other members of the WMCA requested a costed plan of what councils and other partners can do to deliver the 2041 target. Therefore, the WMCA launched '#WM2041 actions to meet the climate crisis with inclusivity, prosperity, and fairness: a discussion document' in January 2020 to test ideas and gather evidence by March 2020. The results and recommendations will then be agreed by WMCA members on how to implement individually as councils, how to implement together in areas such as transport, securing more powers and funding from the Government, or lobbying for accelerated action on national policy such as the decarbonisation of our energy supply and uptake of electric vehicles.
- 6.5 Individual councils within the WMCA area that want to set faster targets than 2041 are free to do so. To date the majority of councils within the WMCA area have followed the lead of Wolverhampton in setting more ambitious targets for their own operations and using the regionally agreed 2041 target as the starting point for their wider areas.
- 6.6 One of SWM's recommendations was that the consultation process on the draft climate change commitments included a question about setting a 2041 carbon reduction target for the Wolverhampton area, together with links to the evidence base used by the WMCA.
- 6.7 From the results of the local consultation 74% of the respondents supported this city wide target, 15% believed it should be sooner, with 11% unsure or against the target. Therefore 89% of consultees were supportive of a minimum city wide target being 2041 and sooner if possible. The idea of a city wide target was also raised during the citizen assembly, with the final report from this process expected shortly.
- 6.8 Therefore, following SWM's review and the results from public consultation it is recommended that the City of Wolverhampton Council set an initial city wide target for net-zero carbon emissions by 2041 using the same framework and methodology used by the WMCA which has already broken this down for individual councils. Then to work with the emerging evidence base and ideas from the local and regional consultation processes to develop a costed city wide action plan. The reality is that there will be many actions that will require extra funding or changes in national policy, but there will be many areas that partners across the city can work on that already make economic sense and deliver wider health or employment benefits.

7.0 Citizens Assembly Feedback

7.1 A Citizen's Assembly took place throughout February 2020. This assembly was led by the consultancy Britain Thinks. A full report of the assembly's actions has come out (see Appendix 3).

7.2 The recommended actions were divided into three fields – Council, City and Community. These six actions are included in Our Climate Commitment.

7.3 Council

- Using renewable energy sources (e.g. wind power) to power the electricity in all Council buildings
- Making sure all Council buildings are as energy efficient as possible

7.4 City

- Increase sustainability in schools
- Encourage businesses to stop using single-use plastics

7.5 Community

- Run a campaign about the risks of climate change and actions communities and businesses can take to help. (This was most popular recommended action by a large margin).
- Support community groups to get funding for 'green' projects

8.0 Reasons for decision

8.1 Consultation has now taken place on Our Climate Commitment which has been revised following the consultation process as detailed within this report.

9.0 Financial implications

9.1 Since Wolverhampton Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, various actions have been implemented across the Council. To date, the development of Our Climate Commitment and other associated work around Climate Change has been largely resourced from existing service revenue budgets within Business Services and the Corporate Programme Office.

9.2 Other initiatives, detailed within this report which have already progressed and incurred a direct financial cost to the Council are explained below:

9.3 The purchasing of the Council's electricity from carbon neutral sources will cost an addition £7,000 per annum when compared with the previous energy supply costs, this cost will be met from within the existing energy revenue budgets.

- 9.4 The development of a heat network technical feasibility assessment is costing £69,000. BEIS's Heat Network Development Unit Funding is providing £46,000 of the cost, the remaining cost will be met from existing Council revenue budgets.
- 9.5 The on street electric vehicle charging infrastructure has been delivered through a grant of £478,000 from OLEV's Electric Taxi Fund. Match-funding for the infrastructure has been funded by the delivery partner, internal Council staff resources have supported this scheme.
- 9.6 Details of the Bowman's Harbour Solar Farm development are still under negotiation with the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust. At this point the scheme is anticipated to deliver a net income to the Council over the life of the development.
- 9.7 It is inevitable that there will be future initiatives and schemes which arise from Our Climate Commitment or the subsequent action plan which will be presented to Cabinet in the new financial year, each of these will be subject to their own business cases and appropriate governance.
[HM/09032020/E]

10.0 Legal implications

- 10.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this Report. If the Council needs to enter into any contracts or amendments these will need to be authorised in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
[TS/05032020/Q]

11.0 Equalities implications

- 11.1 An initial equalities analysis screening process has been completed and identified that there are no implications arising from this report.

12.0 Climate change and environmental implications

- 12.1 There are significant climate change and environmental implications which are dealt with in the main body of the report.

13.0 Human resources implications

- 13.1 Any posts created to support the delivery of Our Climate Commitment will be appointed to through the Council's normal recruitment process.

14.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 14.1 Any corporate landlord implications that arise from the delivery of Our Climate Commitment will be analysed on a case by case basis.

15.0 Health and wellbeing implications

- 15.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

16.0 Schedule of background papers

16.1 Full Council, 17 July 2019, [Motion to Council, Climate Emergency Declaration](#).

17.0 Appendices

17.1 Appendix 1 – Our Climate Commitment.

17.2 Appendix 2 – Responses to the Consultation Survey.

17.3 Appendix 3 – Report from the Citizen’s Assembly that took place throughout February 2020.