

Cabinet Meeting

21 October 2015

Report title	Environmental Sustainability Implementation Plan Monitoring Report 2014/15	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keren Jones, City Economy	
Originating service	Planning	
Accountable employee(s)	Ric Bravery Tel Email	Sustainability Officer 01902 552177 Ric.bravery@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Sustainability Delivery Group Place Leadership Team Sustainability Advisory Group Strategic Executive Board Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel	5 June 2015 6 July 2015 22 July 2015 28 July 2015 1 October 2015

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Provide comments on the Council's Environmental Sustainability Implementation Plan monitoring and Climate Local Wolverhampton progress report for 2014/15
2. Provide guidance on the projects and actions in the draft Environmental Sustainability Implementation Plan programme for 2015/16
3. Approve the report for publication, with delegated authority to the chair of the Sustainability Advisory Group to approve, firstly, a final version of the monitoring and progress report and, secondly, amendments to the 2015/16 programme as projects and actions develop

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of progress in the second year of the Council's joint Environmental Sustainability Implementation Plan and Climate Local Action Plan, to seek comments on the monitoring report for 2014/15 and to seek guidance on the projects and actions contained in the draft Environmental Sustainability Implementation Plan programme for 2015/16. It is further to seek approval of the report for publication, subject to any further amendments to be agreed by the Chair of the Sustainability Advisory Group.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 24 April 2013 the leaders of the Council's three political parties signed the Climate Local Wolverhampton commitment on behalf of the City Council, following approval by Cabinet. Climate Local is an initiative, led by the Local Government Association, to assist councils in reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change. The Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan 2013-18 was subsequently approved by Cabinet on 24 July 2013. It also forms the Council's Climate Local Wolverhampton Action Plan.
- 2.2 The Sustainability Strategy identified the main challenges facing the Council and City with regards to sustainability and these are reflected in four priorities:
1. Provide effective support to deliver a green economy and achieve sustainable economic development
 2. Address the causes and effects of climate change and support the move to renewable and low carbon energy
 3. Promote social inclusion and equal opportunities
 4. Protect and enhancing the natural and built environment
- The aim of the Sustainability Implementation Plan is to deliver these priorities.
- 2.3 The Implementation Plan contained a range of actions with a timetable for implementation. The first Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan monitoring and Climate Local progress report, for 2013/14, was approved by the Sustainability Advisory Group on 8 July 2014 and the Vibrant, Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 17 July 2015. It was subsequently published on the Council's website.
- 2.4 The Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan superseded a number of previous documents and provides a streamlined approach to delivering sustainability. It has succeeded in co-ordinating council activities and identifying both good practice and gaps where further work is required. Its first year highlighted the breadth of its scope and the resources required to deliver such a broad range of actions and to monitor this activity. At the same time the Council's financial challenges focussed attention on its key corporate priorities and the need to make the most of opportunities for partnership working.

2.5 Following discussions between councillors and senior managers, including at the Sustainability Advisory Group on 14 January 2014, a review of the Council's sustainability function was led by the Service Director for the City Economy. This review produced an Implementation Plan focussed on a more limited range of key projects and areas of work and on identifying opportunities for partnerships with other organisations to assist in their delivery. This report provides monitoring results for the revised Implementation Plan for 2014/15 and forms the Council's Climate Local progress report for the same period. It also provides a draft Implementation Plan for 2015/16.

3.0 Progress on the revised Environmental Sustainability Implementation Plan

- 3.1 A summary of the 2014/15 monitoring report for the Implementation Plan, aligned to the priorities of the Corporate Plan 2015/16, is contained in Appendix 1 along with full monitoring details. Each action is given a reference starting with an identifying letter, aligning them to outcomes which are linked to the priorities of the Sustainability Strategy.
- 3.2 The programme for 2014/15 contains 28 actions, down from 72 in the previous programme, providing a more focused Implementation Plan. There are 11 key projects which provide the main focus for developing further the Council's work on sustainability; six being delivered and five being developed. In addition there are 17 on-going actions. Of the 10 of these within the Council some involve annual programmes while others are activities which have the potential to produce individual projects. There are also seven on-going actions in partnership with external agencies which have the potential to produce projects.
- 3.3 Of the six key projects being delivered, all are making progress despite continued slippage on the implementation of sustainable procurement practices (E2). Projects on leading for the Black Country LEP on development of low carbon projects (E1), on a Smart City Strategy (E3), on the Council's renewable and low carbon energy programme on council property (C1) and on the Travel Plan and Active Travel Strategy (A1 and A2) all show good progress during the year.
- 3.4 Of those five projects being developed, four show significant progress with funding bids being successful for 'smart grid' (E4) and Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) projects (A3), both of which have commenced in 2015-16; these are included as key projects for implementation in the draft 2015-16 programme. The Council was unsuccessful in its funding bids to support Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (E5), either alone or in partnership, but continued to explore opportunities. Public Health also successfully established a project to support self-reliant communities which is continuing into 2015-16 (S1). With regard to the fifth action (A4), two opportunities have been identified to develop an environmental project to improve the image of the City. Both are best pursued at a wider Black Country level and are continuing to be explored in 2015-16.
- 3.5 With regard to the on-going actions, of the 10 within the Council the annual programmes, such as improvements to the Council's housing stock and open spaces (C3 and A7), proceeded successful as did the establishment of the Planning for Urban Health Working Group to improve public health (S2). In other areas the Housing Service and

Wolverhampton Homes continued to explore opportunities to generate renewable energy from the Council's housing (C2) and the Waste and Recycling Service continued to work hard to reduce the level of contamination of recycling (A6). The project to maximise the energy efficiency of council corporate buildings is moved into the key projects being delivered in the draft programme for 2014/15 as the Futurespace initiative for the Civic Centre is developed and the Corporate Landlord service provides a stronger focus on this area.

- 3.6 The seven on-going actions in partnership cover a broad range of areas. Some, such in as the commencement of the Interchange Block 10 development to BREEAM Excellent standard and publication of the West Midlands Community Risk register (C8) and Low Emission Towns and Cities programme (A9), show specific results. Other actions, such as exploring the potential for renewable and low carbon energy projects (E6) and fully delivering the Affordable Warmth Grant programme (C7), have proved more challenging.
- 3.7 Appendix 1 also includes a draft programme for 2015/16. This contains 10 key projects being delivered including the addition of: a 'smart grids' project (E4); maximising energy efficiency on council property (C5); delivering the LSTF project for the Stafford Road corridor (A3); and supporting self-reliant communities (S10).
- 3.8 The key projects being developed are reduced to three actions and further work is required to identify potential projects for implementation as existing projects are complete. It is in this area that guidance from the Panel is particularly welcome. For this reason, and to retain flexibility to amend the Implementation Plan through the year as project ideas develop or prove unfeasible, this programme is presented as a draft.
- 3.9 One issue raised in the discussions about the Council's sustainability function in early 2014 was the need to raise its profile within the Council. For this reason the report has been brought to Cabinet for comment and final approval. Prior to this the report has been considered by: the Sustainability Advisory Group, who commented on the need to identify external funding for projects, to learn from best practice elsewhere and identify resources to develop and deliver projects; and by the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel, who commented on the need to take further action to improve air quality and to combat climate change, again looking at best practice from other councils.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report which reports progress against agreed actions. [TK/10092015/J]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report which reports progress against agreed actions. [RB/11092015/M]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 An equalities analysis was prepared and reported upon as part of the process of preparation and approval of the Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan. Further equalities analyses will be produced as required as individual projects are developed.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 This report outlines progress against actions contained in the Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan which will reduce the negative effects of climate change, pollution and other negative forces on the City and assist in producing a better quality natural and built environment.

8.0 Schedule of background papers

8.1 Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan 2013-18.