

Carbon Reduction Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 21st October 2020

Author: Cabinet Member for Climate Change
Director of Economy, Growth and Place

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report introduces Swindon Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy and sets out the measures proposed to reduce SBC's carbon emissions and to influence those of the wider borough.
- 1.2 The strategy aligns with the Council's Vision for Swindon: "By 2030, Swindon will have all of the positive characteristics of a British city with one of the UK's most successful economies; a low-carbon environment with compelling cultural, retail and leisure opportunities and excellent infrastructure. It will be a model of well managed housing growth which supports and improves new and existing communities"
- 1.3 The strategy, while setting out the path towards net zero for the Council, also shows the extent of investment already made by Swindon Borough Council to further its commitment to the vision for Swindon. The Council has already invested in excess of £15m in low carbon interventions to show real leadership in making Swindon the best it can be as a low carbon economy.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the objectives and content of the draft Carbon Reduction Strategy to release for wider consultation. The draft strategy summarised and contained in full in appendix 1.
- 2.2 Request that the Cabinet Member bring back the amended Strategy for approval by Cabinet and Council in February 2021.
- 2.3 Authorise the Director of Economy, Growth and Place to be the lead officer for the delivery of this strategy.

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3. Detail

Swindon Borough Council Resolution

- 3.1 Climate change is the biggest environmental threat that the world currently faces; governments and administrations worldwide have responded to the evolving climate change issue by committing to reduce carbon emissions in the coming decades. In June 2019, the UK Government set a legally binding target for the UK to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- 3.2 Swindon Borough Council is committed to playing its part in helping the Borough reduce carbon dioxide by agreeing to reduce carbon emissions and become a net zero carbon organisation by 2030. Further to this target the Council recognises the wider issue of Climate Change and will continue to show leadership to businesses and residents across the Borough by working to influence the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2050.
- 3.3 At a meeting of Swindon Full Council on 23 January 2020, Members unanimously agreed a resolution committing the Council to reduce its corporate carbon emissions, with the aim of making the Council's estate and activities carbon neutral by the end of the decade.
- 3.4 Members voted to ensure the Council's strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with a shift to zero carbon by 2030 (Council Minute 67 2019/20 refers).
- 3.5 By taking a lead in the climate change movement, the Council aims to inspire local businesses, residents and other organisations to take a similar approach.
- 3.6 A special Climate Change Cabinet Member Advisory Group was established in 2019 and is led by the Cabinet Member for Climate Change. Early thinking and recommendations from this group have fed into the strategy development and will also inform the implementation plan which will be developed for delivery of the strategy.

Swindon Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy

- 3.7 This document will be formed of two distinct sections: Part 1 covers the direct emissions from Swindon Borough Council's activities that are directly managed and controlled. Part 2 will cover the wider borough and indirect emissions. Each section explains why it is important for Swindon Borough Council to develop a carbon management programme and how the Council plans to achieve the carbon dioxide reduction targets set. To do this the strategy addresses four areas:
 - 3.7.1 Scope 1: Carbon emissions from sources that directly burn the fossil fuel, such as gas boilers and combustion engines,

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- 3.7.2 Scope 2: Carbon emissions from electricity usage,
- 3.7.3 Scope 3: Carbon emissions from sources that the council does not directly control (a subset of this group is the Council's housing stock, which is owned by the Council however the usage is outside the Council's control),
- 3.7.4 Wider Borough Emissions: Carbon emissions that are wholly outside of the council's control. These are emissions the Council will look to influence and encourage the reduction of, through effective partnership working.

How the Council will measure and reduce emissions

- 3.8 In order to understand better the Council's carbon emissions and outputs, a process to calculate a new baseline of Swindon Borough Council carbon output was begun in January 2020, providing a dataset that will serve as the basis for future comparison and benchmarking.
- 3.9 The baseline figure will serve as a reference point for progress against both Scope 1 and 2 emissions. Progress in reducing these emissions will directly contribute towards the achievement of the Council's 2030 objective. This baseline figure has been calculated using data from the 2018/19 financial year, converting all outputs into a Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) figure using UK Government Green House Gas (GHG) Conversion Factors for Company Reporting 2018. The total for scopes 1 and 2 is 11,823 CO₂e.
- 3.10 For Scope Three, further reviews are necessary to understand the use and emissions related to many of the areas including waste and staff commuting and these will be incorporated into the implementation plan as they are completed.
- 3.11 The Council's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 is ambitious but necessary to ensure that the Council plays its part in the world's collaborative approach to climate change. As shown in the strategy, the Council has already taken strides towards reducing its carbon emissions through the commencement and completion of key projects in recent years but the Council need to do more to expedite progress.
- 3.12 A set of objectives has been developed to drive change in Swindon, which are set out below. In order to set out how the Council will deliver these objectives an overarching Carbon Reduction implementation plan will be developed; this will follow an extensive review of all Council activities and emission sources; the Council will aim to publish this implementation plan by April 2021.
- 3.13 The carbon reduction objectives are as follows:
 - 3.13.1 Reduce the energy related emissions from the council's own building stock/ portfolio (including street lighting),

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- 3.13.2 Reduce the fuel related emissions from SBCs owned vehicle fleet,
 - 3.13.3 Reduce the emissions from SBC Staff business mileage carried out in personal vehicles,
 - 3.13.4 Reduce the emissions from SBC Construction and other related activities,
 - 3.13.5 Reduce energy related emissions from SBC owned housing stock (including sheltered housing schemes),
 - 3.13.6 Reduce emissions from SBC staff commuter journeys,
 - 3.13.7 Identify and reduce procurement/ supply chain related emissions,
 - 3.13.8 Reduce waste related emissions from direct SBC activities,
 - 3.13.9 Identify other council led interventions,
 - 3.13.10 Use policy levers to create change e.g. EV charging requirements in new build,
 - 3.13.11 Encourage emission reductions from Central Government, Swindon businesses and Swindon residents, through lobbying, influencing and example, and
 - 3.13.12 Use education to promote low carbon activity.
- 3.14 A set of suggested deliverables and key areas of focus are contained in the draft strategy; this will inform and be superseded by the Carbon Reduction Implementation Plan when published.

Wider Borough Emissions

- 3.15 Swindon Borough Council has taken the additional commitment to help the wider borough become Net Zero Carbon by 2050. In order to help measure Borough wide emission the SCATTER tool will be utilised. SCATTER is a local authority focussed emissions tool and has been funded by the department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in collaboration with Nottingham City Council, the Anthesis Group and the Tyndall Centre.
- 3.16 SCATTER stands for Setting City Area Targets and Trajectories for Emissions Reduction. This tool generates a Greenhouse Gas emissions inventory following the Global Protocol for City-wide Greenhouse Gas emissions for local authority areas. A figure has been arrived at using this calculation, for the wider borough the total is 1,532,440 CO₂e.
- 3.17 A set of measures will be developed to address the emissions and influence behaviour and business practices and some of these are set out in the strategy; these will be developed and will inform the Carbon reduction strategy.
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Project Governance

- 3.18 It is proposed that the Carbon Reduction Strategy Officer-Group in consultation with the Climate Change Cabinet Member Advisory Group would be responsible for day-to-day the delivery of this project; they would meet at least every quarter, to ensure progress towards the overall net zero ambition.
- 3.19 Various officer sub-groups may be created and deployed to focus on specific priority areas. It is expected that these sub-groups would meet much more regularly as the project dictates.
- 3.20 The two main groups, Carbon Reduction Strategy Group and Climate Change Cabinet Member Advisory Group will regularly liaise on priority actions and current focus to ensure that their work complement each other. However, the Council's formal decision-making process would still need to be applied as well as the project being subject to scrutiny from the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Offsetting Strategy

- 3.21 Reducing emissions through direct action will be the main approach to becoming a carbon neutral organisation. But there will be a certain level of emissions which currently are not practically or financially possible to reduce within ten years. As the strategy and implementation plan develops, the Council hopes to be able to calculate the level of offsetting that is required to help achieve the 2030 target. The Council will develop and publish a carbon offset strategy to address this. Where possible offsetting activities will be kept within the Borough boundary.
- 3.22 It is likely that the main areas for offsetting focus will be biodiversity offsetting, through tree planting, protecting green spaces etc. Renewable energy technology offsetting through the installation of suitable projects within borough also energy efficiency subsidy schemes will be investigated with regard to suitability.
- 3.23 The Council are also embarking on an accelerated tree planting programme scheduled to commence in winter 2020. The programme will target tree planting in both urban and rural settings, the planting of extensive woodland blocks and significant numbers of individual trees on both public and private land. Using an adopted methodology from the Forestry Commission to calculate per hectare impact, we anticipate that by 2050, each hectare of developed woodland will capture between 180-240 tonnes of CO2 from the atmosphere.

Next Steps

- 3.24 In light of the evidence above, officers are recommending to Cabinet that the draft strategy is approved for consultation. It is anticipated that this will be circulated to an agreed set of partners, community organisations and residents for comment. The

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strategy will be out for consultation for a period of 10 weeks, comments will be collated and considered and the final draft will be submitted to Cabinet and Council in February 2021.

- 3.25 Work will continue on data gathering and benchmarking for the wider borough in order to create a set of interventions, which will work to influence business, residents and community organisations in the borough to identify and implement lower carbon practices.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Cabinet could choose not to proceed to consultation with this draft strategy. However, without it the Council will not have a formal plan to become a net zero carbon organisation by 2030.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 Any work streams arising would have to be managed within existing budgets. There are no immediate financial or procurement implications in this report. When the implementation plan is agreed, a set of cost implications will be part of this and submitted for consideration.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the proposals within this report are compatible with Convention Rights.

Climate Change Impact

- 5.3 The recommendations would bring about a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint through the substantive content of the report. The subsequent implementation plan will set out the exact details of these reductions.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 This report has no specific implications other than those referred to in the report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed in relation to this report. The Diversity Impact Assessment will be integral to all implementation plans.

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Risk Management

- 5.6 Risk is assessed as an ongoing activity as part of the Corporate Scorecard and Risk Register process.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (s151 officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Carbon Reduction Strategy

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for October 2020.