

Carbon Reduction Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd February 2021

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 seeks Cabinet's approval of the final Carbon Reduction Strategy included at appendix 1 .
- 1.2 The report follows the draft Carbon Reduction Strategy that was presented to and approved by Cabinet on 21st October 2020 (Minute 29, 2020/21 refers) and provides an update by way of a final strategy for Cabinet's consideration and approval. The final strategy would set out the overarching objectives that will guide the actions that need to be taken to reduce the Council's carbon emissions and to influence those of the wider borough.
- 1.3 The final 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.'

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve content of the final Carbon Reduction Strategy as summarised in the body of the report and attached at Appendix 1.

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 Council 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). Following this, Cabinet approved a draft strategy and authorised a consultation process on 21st October 2020 (Cabinet Minute 59, 2020/21 refers).

Swindon Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy

- 3.2 The following section summarises the salient points of the CRS included at appendix 1. This document is formed of two distinct sections: Part 1 covers the direct emissions from Swindon Borough Council's activities that are directly managed and controlled.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Rob Fulford, 07866 005191, rfulford@swindon.gov.uk.

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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:

- 3.2.1 Scope 1: Carbon emissions from sources that directly burn the fossil fuel, such as gas boilers and combustion engines,
- 3.2.2 Scope 2: Carbon emissions from electricity usage,
- 3.2.3 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),
- 3.2.4 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

- 3.3 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 undertaken in January 2020, providing a dataset that will serve as the basis for future comparison and benchmarking.
- 3.4 The baseline figure calculated 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.
- 3.5 For Scope Three emissions, 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.
- 3.6 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. The Implementation Plan will build on the strategy's content and provides a more detailed breakdown of the actions the Council will take to reduce its carbon footprint. The

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Implementation Plan will be developed throughout 2021 in conjunction with established carbon reduction working groups and other relevant internal and external stakeholders.

- 3.7 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. The development of this plan will follow an extensive review of all Council activities and emission sources and consider the feedback received from the draft Carbon Reduction Strategy Consultation (Nov 2020 – Jan 2021). The Council will aim to publish the first iteration of this implementation plan by April 2021.
- 3.8 The carbon reduction objectives remain as follows:
- 3.8.1 Reduce the energy related emissions from the council's own building stock/ portfolio (including street lighting),
 - 3.8.2 Reduce the fuel related emissions from SBCs owned vehicle fleet,
 - 3.8.3 Reduce the emissions from SBC Staff business mileage carried out in personal vehicles,
 - 3.8.4 Reduce the emissions from SBC Construction and other related activities,
 - 3.8.5 Reduce energy related emissions from SBC owned housing stock (including sheltered housing schemes),
 - 3.8.6 Reduce emissions from SBC staff commuter journeys,
 - 3.8.7 Identify and reduce procurement/ supply chain related emissions,
 - 3.8.8 Reduce waste related emissions from direct SBC activities,
 - 3.8.9 Identify other council led interventions,
 - 3.8.10 Use policy levers to create change e.g. EV charging requirements in new build,
 - 3.8.11 Encourage emission reductions from Central Government, Swindon businesses and Swindon residents, through lobbying, influencing and example, and
 - 3.8.12 Use education to promote low carbon activity.
- 3.9 A set of suggested deliverables and key areas of focus are contained in the final strategy; this will inform and be superseded by the development of the Carbon Reduction Implementation Plan when published.

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Wider Borough Emissions

- 3.10 Swindon Borough Council has taken the additional commitment to help the wider borough become Net Zero Carbon by 2050 and to support interventions which will support an earlier date. 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.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 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 and be included as actions within the associated Implementation Plan

Project Governance

- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 Various officer sub-groups will also 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. It is expected that each sub-group will be contribute to the development and delivery of the Implementation Plan.
- 3.15 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

- 3.16 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 and continually assess the level of offsetting that is required to help achieve the 2030

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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.

- 3.17 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.
- 3.18 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.

Public Consultation

- 3.19 Council embarked on a public consultation process from November 2020 – January 2021 in order to seek the engagement and feedback from businesses, residents and focus groups based within the borough of Swindon. The consultation process has provided support for the approach taken in the development of this strategy as well as highlighting suggested areas of focus within the creation and delivery of the Implementation Plan. Some key findings from the consultation process include:
- 3.19.1 The overwhelming majority of respondents (94.7%) agreed with all or some of the visions and principles of the carbon reduction strategy.
- 3.19.2 68.9% of respondents agree with the Council's target to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030.
- 3.19.3 A significant majority of respondents agreed with the scope and breadth of all 12 objectives. For each of the 12 objectives, at least 79.9% selected 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.
- 3.19.4 A number of respondents felt that the Council could do more to engage more organisations working to reduce carbon emissions and work with residents at a local level. This includes suggested closer working with Parish Councils going forward.
- 3.20 The Council will explore the feasibility of making consultation responses publicly available in the future.

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Next Steps

- 3.21 In light of the above, officers are recommending to Cabinet that the final strategy is approved. The strategy has been out for public consultation for a period of 8 weeks (Nov 2020 – Jan 2021) with comments collated, considered and included within the final draft attached for approval.
- 3.22 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.. Work to develop the Implementation Plan will continue throughout 2021.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Cabinet could choose not to proceed to consultation with the final strategy. However, without it the Council will not have a final plan to become a net zero carbon organisation by 2030 and thus a basis to undertake co-ordinated and considered carbon reduction actions and activities.

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 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.

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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.

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 February 2021.