

Cabinet

25th November 2021

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLANS

Recommendation

That Cabinet approves the allocation of £200,000 from the Climate Change Investment Fund to take forward work across the sub-region with partners to deliver a response to COP26, using the funding to deliver the actions set out in section 2 of this report.

1.0 Background and context

- 1.1 The Council has declared a climate emergency, and in response has established a Climate Change Programme with the aim of achieving net zero emissions for the Council by 2030. This is based on the Cabinet approved recommendations in January 2020 of the Member Task and Finish Group on Climate Change Mitigation, adopted in the Council Plan 2025 in February 2020.
- 1.2 In June 2021 the Cabinet agreed to join UK100 and in doing so sign up to its pledges to achieve net zero emissions targets and in particular to achieve area wide net zero emissions by 2050. To do so requires the Council to build on its current action plan and its partnerships across the region and across sectors. It means exploring all avenues for further funding and devolved powers to deliver on such a scale at pace.
- 1.3 Earlier this month the World's leaders gathered in Glasgow for COP26, the United Nations Climate Change Conference. In the lead up to COP26, the Council signed up to its Race to Net Zero global campaign, the pledges being the same as those for UK100. The additional benefit from signing up to the Race to Net Zero campaign is that the Council has access to a global network of public sector organisations, can learn from case studies from around the world as well as technical support on issues such as reporting on greenhouse gas emissions.
- 1.4 The Council is promoting its programme on tackling Climate Change through the LGA, who were present at COP26 with a stand showcasing the Council's Green Shoots community grant scheme that has awarded over £625,000 to 69 organisations to fund local climate change projects.
- 1.5 The Council is also progressing the planning of the Coventry and Warwickshire Climate Change summit with Coventry City Council, the Borough and District

Councils and Warwickshire University. This will take place in March 2022 at Warwick University and will invite leaders from across the public sector, voluntary and community sector and industry in our region with the aim of unifying collective ambitions and actions to achieve net zero emissions for the county by 2050.

- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to the funding required for:
- Delivery of the Coventry and Warwickshire Climate Change summit.
 - Build upon the commitments to tackle Climate Change in the current Council Plan 2025, with a focussed Council-wide Climate Change Action Plan to deliver its target for organisational Net Zero by 2030.
 - Progressing the work to establish an area-wide Net Zero by 2050 Climate Change Action Plan, securing additional expert resources to work with all Councils and their partners to build on current climate change plans.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 The Council's commitment to achieve area wide net zero emissions for the county by 2050 needs significant co-ordination and collaboration between all Councils in Warwickshire, Coventry and the wider public sector and industry.
- 2.2 To achieve this, it is proposed that by the middle of 2022, the Council works with Coventry City Council and the District and Borough Councils across Warwickshire to join up individual organisational plans across the sub-regional geography to be net zero no later than 2050, to ensure that collectively these plans are backed by a realistic and deliverable trajectory.
- 2.3 In doing so, it is hoped that other parts of the public sector particularly health and police, and the universities and other higher and further education institutions will commit to the same collaboration which could be embodied in a joint statement for all the parties to sign in order to achieve net zero emissions targets. We would also seek similar pledges of commitment from major business and voluntary/community sector bodies in the sub-region to play their part in achieving net zero.
- 2.4 This collaborative work would also seek to achieve a clear joint strategy to engage the public and communicate with them about the sub-region's progress towards net zero. In addition, to also agree a proportionate structure to oversee and monitor delivery and progress against the 2050 net zero plan and to drive forward the joint actions requiring co-ordination and collaboration.
- 2.5 This scale of collaboration will also enable the sharing of good practice, identify barriers and solutions to accelerate the sub-region's progress towards net zero

and to develop collective confidence and ambition to help the city and county mitigate the risks of climate change and harness the opportunities.

- 2.6 A joined up, collectively owned plan for net zero by 2050 will require the appointment of third-party capacity and expertise. Officers are using the UK100 network, and other contacts at the LGA, to source suitable third-party organisations who have delivered similar work for other local authorities.
- 2.7 Officers are in discussions with the Coventry and Warwickshire Councils exploring a joint commission. If a joint commission can be agreed with a high paced timetable, the existing All-Councils Group of Climate Change Lead Officers will provide the management of the procurement, appointment, and ongoing monitoring of the third-party to deliver the action plan, and report to the existing Warwickshire Local Councils Climate Emergency Partnership who will provide the Member oversight.
- 2.8 It is envisaged that this Council will be the lead authority for the procurement and the other Councils have been requested to make a contribution in order to meet the costs. The value of the commission is unknown but is likely to exceed £100,000 and will require a robust procurement exercise in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders. It is envisaged that one bidder will be selected with their appointment commencing as soon as possible in 2022.
- 2.9 At the same time the Council will seek third-party expertise to deliver a focussed Council-wide Climate Change Action Plan to deliver its target for organisational Net Zero by 2030, building upon the adopted commitments in the existing Council Plan 2025. The aim will be to fold in the latest thinking and learning from our current climate change activity, COP26 outcomes, learning from our new networks and emerging funding opportunities, in order to provide up to date delivery plans, investment plans and a realistic trajectory to achieve the 2030 target. Officers will explore the merits of this commission being delivered by the same procured expertise referred to in paragraph 2.8.
- 2.10 In addition to the cost of the third-party commissions referred to in paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9, there will be costs for the regional Climate Change summit event and for a second phase report on Climate Change Impact Assessment which will provide recommendations on climate change adaptation work which will contribute to the content and delivery of the Net Zero by 2050 Action Plan. These are still being costed at this time, but it is prudent to set aside a sum to provide a working budget to ensure the Council can move swiftly in its response and commitment to build on COP26. As work progresses, detailed costings and impacts will be reported and monitored through the Council's Climate Change Delivery Group chaired by the Strategic Director for Resources.
- 2.11 The overall cost of activity in paragraphs 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10 is difficult to estimate, but it is proposed that a sum of £200,000 is sufficient to provide suitable flexibility to deliver the pieces of work.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The process for developing the new Medium Term Financial Strategy has required a pause to any new allocations of investment funds. However, this proposal for allocating a sum from the existing Climate Change Investment Fund has come forward now in order to capitalise on the timing of COP26 and make progress urgently.
- 3.2 In order to define the future significant investment and net zero impact of this long-term challenge, some investment is clearly needed now. By investing in the Coventry and Warwickshire Climate Change summit and the delivery of an area wide collective 2050 action plan, together with an updated Net Zero by 2030 organisational Climate Change Plan, will enable the investment needs of Climate Change to feed in to medium to long term financial planning, the prioritising of future revenue and capital funding and pipelining of future programmes of work to deliver realistic and deliverable trajectory to reach net zero for the organisation by 2030 and for the area by 2050.
- 3.3 The Council has put in place a £4m Climate Change investment fund which is delivering a range of projects in the Climate Change Programme. To date £1.257m has been committed, with the remaining £2.743m unallocated. It is proposed that the indicative allocation of a maximum of £200,000 is allocated from the unallocated sum in this investment fund to meet the costs of the activity in paragraphs 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10, returning any unused portion of this allocation back to this investment fund.
- 3.4 It should be reiterated that there is a financial risk that the programme of capital and revenue investment requirements resulting from both the Council's own Climate Change Action Plan for Net Zero by 2030 and the Coventry and Warwickshire wide Net Zero by 2050 Climate Change Action Plan will not be affordable, given the wider priorities for the use of the Council's scarce resources, without significant Government and third-party investment. This will not be known until the work on the development of the costed action plans is completed. The costed plan will help the Council and its partners by informing conversations with Government about powers and resources to support actions needed to tackle climate change in the county.

4.0 Environmental Implications

- 4.1 The Council's current Climate Change Programme and the future action planning proposed by this report needed to achieve targets for net zero emissions are fundamental to mitigating the effects of climate change on the environment and on the lives of Warwickshire residents.

Background papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication: Cllrs Clarke, D'Arcy, Fradgley, Chilvers.

Local Member(s): None

Other members: None