

# Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 February 2023

## Development of Energy Strategy

### Recommendations

That the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the approach to the development of the Energy Strategy, including specifically the scope, the framework and the proposals for stakeholder engagement.

#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In 2015 the Council adopted a Warwickshire Energy Plan, which had as its focus the increased use of low and zero carbon technologies and the promotion of such technologies to the public, helping them to improve their health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 In 2019 the objectives were reviewed and revised, and the Energy Strategy set a commitment to responsible management of energy and utilities in all its estate and operations and to improve efficiency, save money, reduce consumption, reduce carbon emissions, and continually improve its environmental performance.
- 1.3 Linked to the Sustainable Futures Strategy and action plan there is a requirement to further review and update the Energy Strategy to align it to the commitments to tackle Climate Change in the current Council Plan 2022-27.
- 1.4 The Energy Strategy will be aligned to and set a strategy that supports the delivery of the following Sustainable Futures Strategy Themes.

**Energy:** To decarbonise the energy used by the Council, we are committed to identifying opportunities to increase the installation of renewable technologies on council owned buildings and the volume of in-county renewable energy generation.

**Built Environment:** Our goal is to reduce emissions from council buildings energy use by a minimum of 1,700 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030. We will increase our knowledge of energy use within our decentralised assets, decarbonising our natural gas heat supply, identifying opportunities to co-locate with partners, undertaking further property decarbonisation feasibility studies and supporting renewable energy schemes.

- 1.5 The Energy Strategy will also identify how the Council will support the following commitments:
  - responsible management of energy and utilities in all estate operations.
  - net zero emissions for the County by 2050 by working with public sector and other partners and community groups.
- 1.6 The Strategy will have an associated delivery plan that will identify the required resources and actions to support the transition to Net Zero by 2030 (Council) and 2050 (county) and the associated targets.
- 1.7 The purpose of the Energy Strategy will set out how we plan to reduce, use, measure, and generate energy to support the Council's Net Zero 2030 and 2050 targets. The following is the proposed framework around which the Strategy will be developed.

## **2. Approach to Strategy Development**

- 2.1 The approach to the development of the Strategy follows the Council wide approach to the style, format and content of our strategies and is in line with the Strategy Framework that the Council has adopted. The Strategy will adopt the 'why, what, how' frame in its approach setting out the challenge statement that we are trying to address, the key objectives and priorities to address the challenge, the action plan and performance measures and the arrangements for delivery. It will be supported by data and by an annual Building Energy Consumption and Emissions Review that will provide an update on our energy performance. It will also set out the linkages to other strategies such as the Sustainable Futures Strategy and Levelling Up.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1 The proposed Strategy scope will be aligned to the Sustainable Futures Strategy. Assets within scope will be those where we are owner or occupier and/or hold responsibility for full repairs maintenance and operational costs. i.e.
  - Centralised assets such as, but not exclusively, offices and administrative buildings, Libraries, Children & Family Hubs, Fire Stations, Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools and Country Parks.
- 3.2 For those assets where Warwickshire County Council is not the operational budget holder or for those assets where Warwickshire County Council does not hold full repairing and maintenance responsibilities, the Strategy will identify the Council's advisory/ influencing role. i.e. this scenario would include Academy Schools.

## **4. Framework**

- 4.1 The key themes proposed for the Energy Strategy are:
  - Targets and Standards
  - Property Construction and Maintenance Standards
  - Renewable Energy

- Finance
- Environmental Impact
- Community Engagement

#### 4.2 The Strategy will

- Set our current construction standards and make recommendations in relation to how these may need to change.
- Consider the impact of changing statutory standards, such as the requirement to achieve Net Zero development planning and changes to building regulations.
- Clarify our ambitions for renewable energy schemes.
- Consider how to reduce the reliance on the grid and how we may use our existing estate for renewable schemes.
- Confirm our approach to working with partners to identify long term investment opportunities.
- Confirm our commitment to working with Partners in supporting a public sector sustainable strategy. Sharing joint ambitions to improve utilisation of our assets, consider co-locations and where appropriate reduce the public sector portfolio; focussing on investing in assets which meet our environmental standards.
- Identify the opportunities and impact of embedding new standards and approach to the Estate Masterplanning Programme, Place Shaping and Sustainable Travel.
- Address key Environmental compliance interdependencies, including the recycling of waste within our buildings.
- Align the Strategy to the County-wide Levelling Up approach which was approved by Cabinet in July 2022. Considering the impact of regeneration schemes and the building and acquisition of new assets which are publicly owned and/or supporting community ventures.
- Will be supported by an annual Building Energy Consumption and Emissions Review that will provide an update on our energy performance.

### 5. Stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 To ensure that the Energy Strategy is integrated across the Energy Strategy, working with the Policy Team the Energy Strategy will identify how it is aligned to and supporting other local Strategies and programmes (eg EV Charging Strategy, Environmental Policy etc).
- 5.2 In January 2023 the Member Cross Party Climate Emergency Group considered the key themes of the Strategy and supported the approach being taken. There are proposals to continue to work with this Group to support the development of this Strategy and return to the Group in April 2023 to finalise the Strategy development.
- 5.3 A Working group has been established to support the development of the Strategy. Plans to engage with internal stakeholders have been established across the Council. This stakeholder engagement will obtain support with

setting the standards, and set the direction of travel for the Council, to ensure that this Strategy fully supports the Net Zero commitments identified within the Council Plan and Sustainable Futures Strategy.

- 5.4 We have plans to work with Maintained Schools to establish guidance that will support and establish shared approaches and values to support our Net Zero commitments.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The Energy Strategy will consider the financial impact that establishing a low carbon estate will have for the Council. There will be a requirement to ensure that proposals are affordable and in alignment with our MTFS. We will work with finance colleagues to explore all opportunities including exploring all routes for external funding and/or investment.
- 6.2 The Energy Strategy will feed into the short-, medium- and long-term financial planning cycles, enabling prioritisation of future revenue and capital funding and programmes of work. This will enable and support a realistic and deliverable approach in supporting the organisation to reach net zero for the organisation by 2030 and for the county by 2050.

## **7. Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 The Council's current Climate Change Programme and the future action planning proposed in this report are required to achieve targets for net zero emissions and are fundamental to mitigating the effects of climate change on the environment and on the lives of Warwickshire residents. The Energy Strategy will also support the Council's ISO14001 Environmental Management System certification.

## **8. Supporting Information**

- 8.1 The Climate Emergency Cross Party Group considered the Energy Strategy on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and supported the approach proposed to the development of the Strategy. It is intended that the draft Strategy will be further considered by this Cross Party Group before it is considered for approval by Cabinet

## **9. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

- 9.1 Stakeholder engagement both across the Council and also externally will continue as the Strategy is developed with key dates as set out below
- Cross Party Climate Emergency Group – April 2023
  - Climate Change Delivery Group – April 2023
  - Corporate Board – May 2023
  - Cabinet – June 2023

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Report Author	Louise Saunders – Commissioner Energy & Environment	<a href="mailto:louisesaunders@warwickshire.gov.uk">louisesaunders@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury - Assistant Director Governance & Policy	<a href="mailto:sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk">sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Strategic Director	Rob Powell - Strategic Director for Resources	<a href="mailto:robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk">robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Butlin - Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property Cllr Heather Timms – Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture	<a href="mailto:peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk">peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:Heathertimms@warwickshire.gov.uk">Heathertimms@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication: None

Local Member(s): N/a

Other members: Members of the Climate Emergency Cross Party Group