

# Cabinet

30 January 2020

## Report and Recommendations of the Climate Change Mitigation Task and Finish Group

### Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- 1) Provides clear direction through the Council Plan 2020-2025 to work alongside our partners to reduce the Council's carbon impact and that appropriate resources are dedicated to this work.
- 2) Makes climate change considerations a requirement for all council decisions, including capital investments, projects and commissioning exercises.
- 3) Develops improved baseline data and metrics so that we can make decisions and prioritise based on a continually improving understanding of our own carbon emissions and the wider impacts of Warwickshire.
- 4) Establishes a cross party group chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture, to steer work on both climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 5) Works with all partners including Parish and Town Councils, District and Borough Councils, Government, other authorities and the resident and business communities of Warwickshire to achieve real progress on climate change.
- 6) In principle, adopts the targets and actions set out in the report and in particular Appendix 5, and develops detailed and costed action plans for these, to be agreed and managed as part of the Council's business management processes

### 1. Report of the Task and Finish Group

- 1.1 The Climate Change Mitigation Task and Finish Group (The Group) began its work in September 2019 in response to Warwickshire County Council's declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019. The declaration committed the Council to reporting back to cabinet within 6 months with an initial action plan. This work has run alongside the climate change adaptation work.
- 1.2 The Group first carried out an exercise to establish the scope of its initial work. It decided that the early work should be targeted at improving the Council's own carbon impact, in order that the organisation can demonstrate and lead improvements across Warwickshire. A desktop study was used to gain an insight into the main

areas where the Council's activities emit carbon, the relative amounts, what degrees of control and influence we have, and what the data trends are.

- 1.3 Evidence shows that, across areas of the Council's direct emissions a 53% reduction of carbon emissions has been achieved between 2013/14 and 2018/19, a period of only 5 years. In addition, the Council is purchasing pure green electricity for all corporate buildings, meaning an effective reduction in carbon emissions over the 5 years of 82%.
- 1.4 There is still much more that needs to be done. The Council's impacts have been categorised into three main areas of: buildings and energy; travel and transport; and resources. Some impacts are due to fossil fuels being used by our own assets: for heating our buildings and fuelling our vehicle fleet. Also, many carbon emissions arise from the contracts we let; our staff traveling in the course of work and commuting and in all the things that we buy. Having established mechanisms for monitoring and reducing the Council's own emissions, the Council will be able to support partners and Warwickshire businesses and communities to reduce their own impacts.
- 1.5 The Group gathered evidence from officers from across the Council. At a workshop held in November 2019 attendees were asked to highlight mitigation work already being done, planned further work and longer-term work. From this, the detailed summaries within the main report were produced and have influenced the broad and area-specific recommendations, targets and actions.
- 1.6 The Group has produced cross-cutting recommendations that ask Cabinet to take a strategic approach to mitigation, drawing together opportunities identified across the organisation. In addition, there is an action plan of short to medium term projects and investments that will trigger the next phase of carbon reduction activity.
- 1.7 Reducing our carbon impact will involve all parts of the Council's activity and all members of staff. Only by putting carbon reduction at the centre of our planning and decision-making processes will we be able to achieve and lead a drive toward a low carbon county and improve Warwickshire's sustainability.

## **2.0 Financial Implications**

- 2.1 There are potentially significant costs to the Council and the County for failing to act on climate change and investment now is likely to mitigate future revenue costs; however, the cost benefit of this in some cases is very difficult to quantify. Some of the actions and targets being proposed are already planned and funded through the Council's business planning and budgetary processes, others are likely to be supported by "invest to save" business cases, subject to capital funding being available. However, some schemes will not be self-financing but offer other benefits and where this is the case this will need to be clearly stated and evaluated.

2.2 Resources will be required to manage, coordinate and deliver the programme of projects on climate change and officers will need to decide how this is best organised. Detailed and costed action plans will need to be developed for any actions and targets adopted and these will be agreed and managed as part of the Council's business management processes.

### 3.0 Environmental Implications

3.1 The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that we have to make necessary changes to limit a rise in global temperatures to 1.5°C. Failure to act will see a marked increase in sea levels and flooding, extreme and abrupt changes to weather patterns, crop failures, extinctions of plant, insect and animal species and global economic disruption and crisis.

3.2 Consideration of the environment was a core element of the Group's work and the recommendations will have a very positive environmental benefit.

### 4.0 Conclusions

4.1 Climate change is a pressing issue for the Council and the whole of Warwickshire. The Council should push ahead with this important agenda but needs to ensure its ambitions are deliverable and made using sound business thinking. Showing clear action on climate change will help the Council to show leadership and move other organisations to action too.

## Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Task and Finish Group members: Councillors Helen Adkins, Jonathan Chilvers, Daniel Gissane, Anne Parry, Dominic Skinner, Heather Timms and Adrian Warwick and also Councillors Judy Falp and Andy Sargeant.