

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan</b>
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	<b>29 November 2023</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR KEOGH CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT</b>

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<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
n/a	
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	
<p>Southampton City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and soon after set itself the challenge of being a net zero organisation by 2030. More recently, the Southampton City Council Corporate Plan (2022-2030) sets a vision for a zero carbon city by 2035, so that the council can be part of the solution to tackling climate change.</p> <p>This strategy and action plan is Southampton City Council's response to the climate emergency and provides the framework for the Council's actions to deliver net zero carbon. It builds upon the actions introduced in the Green City Plan 2030 and explores in more detail; why tackling climate change is important, priorities requiring attention, the outcomes we want to achieve and the wider benefits on offer. Key projects and actions to achieve those outcomes are provided with timescales.</p> <p>Originally named the 'Net Zero Strategy' when presented for public consultation in early 2023, the current title reflects the feedback received and the subsequent inclusion of climate adaptation and resilience measures and an Action Plan.</p> <p>The current version has been developed following a thorough process of internal and external engagement to ensure our approach remains ambitious whilst also being achievable in its scale and scope, and strikes the right balance, for SCC and those service areas who have more direct responsibility for delivering the actions.</p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	
(i)	Adopt the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2030

	(ii)	To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place, following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, to update the Strategy and Action Plan and make amendments, as long as they do not change its core value or have financial implications, so that all implementation, delivery and management requirements continue to be sufficient and effective.
<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		
1		The Climate Change and Action Plan will support the delivery of the Council's existing priority outcomes, refresh existing activities, and deliver new ones. It will ensure that environmental impacts are given due consideration in the delivery of its services and decision making and where possible ensure we maximise the opportunity to deliver benefits. It will seek to encourage council suppliers, partners and city stakeholders to adopt the same set of principles and deliver their own actions. It will encourage all stakeholders including both business, community groups and public sector organisation to work together to deliver a shared outcome, making Southampton a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable environment for all. It will facilitate the delivery of specific actions in response to the ambition for its services and activities to achieve a net zero carbon footprint by 2030, and the Corporate Plan commitment to be a carbon zero city by 2035.
2		To allow officers to make changes as appropriate and update the documents to reflect ongoing changes in government policy
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>		
3		Not adopt the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2030. Southampton City Council made a commitment in its Green City Plan to update its policy concerning its carbon reduction ambitions and how it would tackle climate change. This document fulfils that requirement and in its absence, risks missing its net zero targets and ability take effective action to address the future risks that climate change presents.
4		Delay adoption of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2030. The document presented has been prepared over a 12-month period and provides an authoritative examination of the opportunities the council currently has available to deliver net zero and address climate change risks. Delaying adoption of the document would leave the council without a clear strategic plan and its ability to progress its ambitions would be hindered.
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>		
5		The majority scientific consensus is that human induced climate change has already started. Our world is warming causing more extreme weather events, and sea level rise. The consequences include increased flooding, more frequent and severe heat waves, water scarcity, more pollution, and loss of biodiversity. There will be a detrimental impact on people's lives including health, and damage to homes, businesses and the economy. Climate change is already having an impact, with parts of the UK reaching over 40oC in July 2022.
6		Our Climate Change Strategy addresses our aim for the council to be net zero carbon (across scope 1 and 2 emissions) by 2030 to lead by example and contribute to reducing emissions across the city. Scope 3 emissions targets will be set when an adequate reporting method has been established.

7	In order to take action to reduce emissions, we need to understand and measure where they come from in the first place. Scopes are the most widely used method of categorising an organisation's emissions. Scope 1 are direct emissions that the council controls, mainly from fossil fuel use such as heating and our vehicles. Scope 2 indirect emissions generated from energy used in our buildings. This is mainly electricity use.
8	Scope 3 indirect emissions are from sources the council uses but does not own or control, but can influence such as staff travel, all goods and services bought by the council, council building waste disposal and water. While The Council cannot directly control many sources of scope 3 emissions, it can influence them.
9	We are a landlord for nearly 18,000 properties and while we are not in direct control of these emissions, we are responsible for them. The housing stock that we own and manage is a significant source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the council estimated in 2022 that it was responsible for 42,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year.
10	By improving insulation, making our stock more energy efficient and less reliant on fossil fuels, we can significantly reduce the emissions associated with essentials like heating and hot water, plus our tenants' energy bills will be reduced. Due to the timeframes surrounding repair and maintenance of our stock this is a longer-term target which is why we will be measuring and reporting on these emissions separately to this strategy.
11	Some of what needs to be done will happen outside Southampton – for example through the ongoing decarbonisation of electricity or the development of electric vehicles. However, numerous options could also be adopted within Southampton to reduce energy use and carbon emissions in homes, buildings, transport and industry, therefore we are also addressing how we can influence and support wider change in the city outside the Council's direct control.
12	<p>With all the above in mind, we have split out what we want to achieve into four goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal 1: achieve net zero for the council's scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030.</li> <li>• Goal 2: reduce the council's scope 3 emissions and establish a practical solution to achieving net zero .</li> <li>• Goal 3: social housing stock to be net zero by 2035.</li> <li>• Goal 4: apply authority and use influence to support the city in becoming net zero and climate ready by 2035.</li> </ul>
13	<p><b>DELIVERING OUR STRATEGY:</b></p> <p>We have previously reported emissions through the Carbon Reduction Commitment to the Environment Agency, but this reporting mechanism has been discontinued. We have developed a toolkit to capture our organisational emissions and going forward we will be using the toolkit which follows industry best practice, has a wider scope and is more comprehensive than its predecessor. The data reported in this strategy is from this toolkit and will offer SCC the opportunity to monitor its progress. We will publish our outputs and reporting methodology via our webpages and explore opportunities to use the <a href="#">CDP's carbon disclosure system</a> to ensure transparency in our progress.</p>

14	Calculating current emissions can be difficult. As part of this Strategy, the Council will need to refine and ensure accuracy in what we report. Accurate emission reporting is critical to measuring progress and knowing if we have been successful and our offsetting needs are accurate and valid.
15	We are further along in some areas (measuring emissions from our council buildings) than others (our housing stock, which is based on modelling and assumptions). As we go forward, the data will change to reflect more and more accurate measurements as well as changes in the actual measurements.
16	We have set 2019 as the baseline year for reporting emissions. This is to ascertain an accurate picture of pre-pandemic conditions as there were significant changes in travel and the use of buildings during the pandemic.
20	We have set a city-wide target to be net zero by 2035 (aligning with the Corporate Plan 2022/23) highlighting the need for action in our city to reduce emissions. Reducing city wide emissions can only be achieved in partnership with communities and business across the city. We are proposing to use a Climate Commission and Citizen's Assembly as tools to facilitate the level of engagement needed to make this happen.
18	The Climate Change Strategy has gone through an internal consultation to key stakeholders in September 2022 and consequently was made available for all employees to view and comment on in November 2022 in anticipation of the external consultation to which began in January 2023 and ran for 10 weeks.
19	The external consultation was supported by the Council's Data, Intelligence & Insight team and the Communications team to ensure all stakeholders were made aware of the opportunity and captured their input effectively. 444 responses were received and assessed. A document setting out the detailed response to categorised comments is included in appendix 3. As a result of the consultation feedback, the scope of the Strategy was expanded to include adaptation to climate change as well as mitigation of emissions, hence the name change from Net Zero Strategy. The consultation also showed a desire for more specific actions, and is why the Strategy is now accompanied by an Action Plan. Over half of respondents (57%) said that they <i>agree</i> with the proposals, with a majority (53%) also saying that they <i>agree</i> with the approach and underlying principles of the strategy.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>	
20	There are no direct financial implications from adopting the Strategy. It does not establish any new financial commitments in relation to the actions that will subsequently need to be delivered. As part of the delivery process, those actions will be subject to the usual project management and decision-making process and include an assessment of costs, benefits and funding arrangements. The measures being pursued often also lead to potential financial benefits for both the Council and the city. For example, phase 1 of the Council's corporate property decarbonisation scheme reduced annual energy costs by £0.33M whilst reducing carbon emissions by 255 tonnes per year. Whilst estimates suggest that a citywide retrofit programme of buildings could reduce carbon emissions by 40% and reduce the city's total energy bill by £62M per year and create 744 employment years.

<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>	
21	N/A
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>	
22	s.1 Localism Act 2011 allows the Council to do anything deemed necessary or desirable to deliver or support its functions and duties providing that action is not otherwise prohibited by statute (the general power of competence). The preparation and delivery of The Strategy and Action Plan is authorised by virtue of s.1.
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>	
23	as the 2008 Climate Change Act provides an overall framework for climate mitigation and adaptation and establishes legally binding emissions targets for the UK, including reaching net zero by 2050. Although it places no specific requirements on local authorities they are widely expected to play an important role in delivering net zero in a number of policy areas, including: Implementing enforcing minimum energy efficiency standards for new builds. Delivering funding to retrofit existing homes and improve their energy efficiency. SCC has made a public commitment to align its commitments with the Climate Change Act and set further, more ambitious targets at a local level to support the national ambitions. The contents of a Plan and its subsequent actions may be authorised by a variety of statutory powers and duties, depending on what those actions are. Legal powers to undertake those actions emerging from the Plan will be further investigated as part of the implementation process and be subject to the democratic process as applicable.
24	In preparing this strategy due regard has been had to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010 and in particular s.149 Public Sector Equality Duty which requires all actions undertaken and proposed by Council's to be designed having regard to the need to reduce and eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment as between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not. Additionally , regard must be had to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 to the extent that any proposals within the strategy impact on people's rights to peaceful enjoyment of their property and possessions. A detailed ESIA is attached to this report setting out impacts and mitigations.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	

25	<p>The net zero and climate change agenda represent a significant worldwide challenge that is backed by scientific consensus, supported by the general media and across political parties. As such, there is a significant reputational risk to the organisation if it is not seen to be taking actions to satisfy the aspirations or ‘delivering’ the stated goals in the Strategy and/or that the actions are not effective in terms of delivering the required outcomes or within the expected timescale.</p> <p>Many of the actions identified by the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan present opportunities to introduce efficiencies, reduce future risks and costs. But in some cases the business case for change is less obvious and this will risks creating tensions with other council priorities, most notably in terms of finances. Innovative financing and funding opportunities will need to be explored to overcome these challenges.</p> <p>There is a risk that failure to deliver a minimum level of improvement in the city environment and, the city’s ability to be more sustainable, will disadvantage the local economy and the health and welfare of those who live, work and visit Southampton.</p> <p>The council’s ability to deliver its intended outcomes places certain expectations on city stakeholders and government. This includes ongoing and improved provision of central government funding to support the activities covered within the Strategy. It is also anticipated that local communities and businesses will cooperate and support us in delivering specific activities. If this support is not forthcoming at the anticipated level delivery of the Strategy could be compromised. The support anticipated is considered to be of a “reasonable” level but is exposed to external influences.</p> <p>The delivery of specific lines of activity will require sufficient assessment to ensure there are no unreasonable unintended consequences. This will be managed through SCC existing project management procedures and governance and the decision-making process.</p> <p>The primary aims of the Strategy cannot be achieved by the council in isolation. Although the council recognises it has a key role to play in achieving a cleaner, greener more sustainable city it must be appreciated that the involvement and contribution from city communities and businesses will be crucial. There will need to be an ongoing focus on engagement with all stakeholders to ensure support and encouragement is effective at maintaining participation.</p>
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
26	<p>The Strategy and Action Plan will assist with delivery of the Corporate Plan 2022/30 and satisfy actions identified in the Green City Plan. They will form part of an integrated policy framework that will ultimately replace the Green City Plan and ensure the council is able to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to address the challenges of climate change and ecological decline by creating a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable city.</p>

<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	Yes	
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	ALL	
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
<b>Appendices</b>		
1.	Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan	
2.	Consultation Report	
3.	Considerations of Consultation responses	
4.	Equality Safety Impact Assessment	
<b>Documents In Members' Rooms</b>		
1.	None	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>		
<b>Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.</b>		<b>Yes</b>
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>		
<b>Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.</b>		<b>No</b>
<b>Other Background Documents</b>		
Other Background documents available for inspection at: N/A		
<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>		<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</b>
1.	N/A	