



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 18 June 2024	Matter for Decision
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Report Title:

Climate Change Strategy

Report Author(s):

Christopher Harrison (Climate Change Officer)

Purpose of Report:	To recommend approval of the Council's Climate Change Strategy.
Report Summary:	<p>Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is committed to playing its part in responding to the growing evidence that urgent action is required to respond to climate change. The Climate Change Strategy provides a longer-term road map for tackling climate change both internally and in the wider borough.</p> <p>This strategy will supersede the current Environment Strategy and Action Plan, to have more focus on climate change.</p> <p>It will be underpinned by short-term delivery plans, working with communities and partners to tackle climate change through mitigation and adaptation internally and in the wider borough.</p> <p>The draft Climate Change Strategy has been drawn up after consideration of other council strategies and plans, government legislation, and organisations working to tackle climate change. There has also been input from Council staff, Senior Leadership and the Environment Working Group. The Strategy went out for public consultation on the Council's website for 6 weeks from Monday 22 January 2024 until to Monday 4 March 2024.</p> <p>It is important that the Council leads on climate action by decarbonising its own operations, and influencing and facilitating action on climate change in the wider community; however, it cannot control or lead in all aspects of this, particularly given the resource constraints of local government.</p> <p>We all have a responsibility to reduce our environmental impact, and for a fair transition those who are most vulnerable or least able to afford should be considered for support.</p> <p>To deliver on the Council's commitment to tackle climate change it is recommended that the finalised Climate Change Strategy be approved.</p>
Recommendation(s):	That the finalised Climate Change Strategy, Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	<p>Adrian Thorpe (Head of Built Environment) (0116) 257 2645 adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Christopher Harrison (Climate Change Officer) (0116) 257 2892</p>

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Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Economy (SO3) Our Environment (SO4) Our Partners (SO5)
Vision and Values:	Customer & Community Focused (V1) Collaborative & Creative (V3) Resourceful & Resilient (V4)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Reputation Damage (CR4) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	The draft Climate Change Strategy went out for public consultation on 22 January 2024 until midday 4 March 2024
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Finalised Climate Change Strategy

1. Background

- 1.1 The release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere through human activities has resulted in global warming and changes to our climate. The latest assessment from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports a 1.1 degree global temperature rise with unprecedented changes to the earth's climate systems and widespread adverse impacts such as more extreme weather events, damage to natural habitats and increased health problems. Greenhouse gas concentrations continue to rise and action is required now to cut emissions to avoid the most damaging climate change impacts.
- 1.2 The Environment Strategy and Action Plan (2019) states that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is committed to playing its part in responding to the growing evidence that urgent

action is required to respond to global warming, and this continues in to the new strategy

- 1.3 The Council has worked with APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) Energy to produce a Climate Change Baseline Study (February 2023) for the reporting year April 2019 to March 2020 (pre-Covid). The baseline study measures the carbon footprint for Council operations which can be used as a benchmark to record current emissions and to track performance against further emissions. APSE have used this baseline to provide a trajectory report to include scenarios for decarbonisation of Council operations and recommendations to do this.
- 1.4 As a local authority we have a leadership role to play and we are taking action to reduce carbon emissions from our own assets and operations. However, tackling climate change cannot be done alone and we also have a role in working locally to reduce the wider borough's emissions, influencing local residents and businesses and encouraging a partnership approach involving a range of stakeholders.
- 1.5 As reported to Service Delivery Committee June 2023 following the Environment Working Group (EWG) held March 2023, the baseline study would feed in to a review of the current Environment Strategy and Action Plan with a greater focus on climate change actions. The EWG Chair considered that it was important that the whole Council owns the actions and assumes responsibility for their contribution to ensuring that the Council meets its targets.
- 1.6 The development of the draft Climate Change Strategy referenced national legislation, Council plans and strategies, links to Leicestershire County Council Net-Zero Strategy as well as current climate partnership work through Green Living Leicestershire. It involved discussions with and input from other Council Officers and was presented to SLT and EWG October 2023 for consideration and amendments.
- 1.7 The Strategy went out to public consultation January 2024 for 6 weeks. The outputs from the consultation and recommended changes were presented to the EWG April 2024. Further amendments were then made to the document before it was finalised for approval at this Policy, Finance and Development Committee meeting

2. Main Considerations

- 2.1 Local Authorities are typically responsible for between 2-5% of local emissions directly. However, potentially they influence more than a third of emissions in their area through their policies and partnerships. The Climate Change Strategy (**Appendix A**) provides a longer term road map for tackling climate change both internally and in the wider borough.
- 2.2 The Strategy provides a framework to enable the Council to lead by example through its own decarbonisation actions, influence local reductions in emissions and shape the wider climate agenda through its policy, engagement and partnership work.
- 2.3 The Strategy links to existing policy and plans and sets out the Council's Vision, achievable Goals and Key Action Areas, and given finite resources help prioritise climate action in future delivery plans. The 6 Action Areas help tackle climate change internally and in the wider Borough through both mitigation and adaptation to create a more sustainable and resilient place to live:
 - Buildings and Energy – support energy efficiency, low carbon heat and renewable energy actions; and help create a climate resilient built environment;
 - Transport – encourage and support sustainable transport alternatives;
 - Resources and Waste – support action to move towards a more circular economy by using our resources better and reducing waste;
 - Local Economy – working with businesses and partners to collectively reduce our

- environmental impact;
- Communities – facilitate residents and communities to take local action to tackle climate change; and
- Nature and Land Use – help protect and enhance natural landscapes and wildlife to support biodiversity, carbon storage and climate resilience

- 2.4 The Climate Change Strategy will evolve over time to be amended and updated to reflect changing circumstances such as government policy, climate science, new technology and following evaluation of climate change initiatives. The long term goals will be reviewed every 5 years.
- 2.5 A progress report on the action plans and update will be provided annually to the Service Delivery Committee to subsequently be published on the Council’s climate change webpage.
- 2.6 It is important that the Council leads on climate action by decarbonising its own operations, and influencing and facilitating action on climate change in the wider community; however, it cannot control or lead in all aspects of this, particularly given the resource constraints of local government. We all have a responsibility to reduce our environmental impact, and for a fair transition those who are most vulnerable or least able to afford should be considered for support.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The Climate Change Strategy went out for public consultation on the Council’s website for 6 weeks from Monday 22 January 2024 until to Monday 4 March 2024. It was also promoted through the email subscription service and went out to 2749 people on the Council’s consultations and surveys mailing list.
- 3.2 12 survey questions on the Strategy were asked with a mixture of closed and open responses allowed. In total there were 20 respondents. There were questions on the following areas: Strategy Vision, Goals, Key Principles and Key Areas for Action.
- 3.3 All comments from respondents have been read and where appropriate have been considered for changes to the Strategy. The consultation analysis and recommendations to amend the document were reported to and considered by Environment Working Group Members in April 2024 before finalisation of the Strategy.
- 3.4 It was reported that there were a small number of respondents and any changes made to the draft Strategy based on their comments needed careful consideration. Therefore, only minor revisions were recommended, given previous input from Members and Staff. The Strategy is high level with broad aims and objectives. A common theme from respondents was wanting specific actions with some mention of cost implications over timeframes; the Climate Change Strategy will be underpinned by delivery plans to include a programme of projects prioritising action as set out within the principles of this strategy to help achieve the Council’s climate goals.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Any projects that meet the Strategy objectives will have legal and financial implications for that project’s service area/department, not directly related to the Strategy. OWBC will need to seek opportunities to deliver the climate change agenda by bidding and accessing available funding sources and by considering and maximising on opportunities to support the climate change agenda when taking all decisions. It may not always be possible to accelerate climate action and commit to all the actions needed to reduce emissions.
- 4.2 The Council will continue to work with partners to call for the scaling up of the provision of

climate finance from national government and other organisations to enable us to take the urgent steps required to tackle climate change during this critical decade.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 A number of specific climate initiatives described in the strategy are already ongoing, are in development or planned. The delivery plans in development will include a programme of projects prioritising action as set out within the principles of this strategy to help achieve the Council's climate goals.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Given the urgency to take climate action the Climate Change Strategy will supersede the current Environment Strategy and Action Plan, to have more focus on climate change.
- 6.2 It will be underpinned by short-term delivery plans, working with communities and partners to tackle climate change through mitigation and adaptation internally and in the wider community.
- 6.3 It is intended the Strategy will encourage others in the wider Borough to take climate action and develop their own plans.
- 6.4 The Strategy includes principles of securing wider co-benefits, such as health and wellbeing, green jobs, reduced energy costs and nature recovery, and emphasising that benefits of climate action should be shared widely and those who are most vulnerable or least able to afford should be considered for support.
- 6.5 One of the 5 strategic objectives of the Corporate Plan is 'Our environment' where the Council commits to:
- To ensure that we are a carbon conscious borough; and
 - To be seen to be 'green'
- 6.6 The Climate Change Strategy has been drawn up with input from Council staff, Senior Leadership, the Environment Working Group and has been out for public consultation.
- 6.7 Given the above it is therefore recommended that the Climate Change Strategy is approved.