

# Report to Cabinet

**23 March 2022**

<b>Subject:</b>	Corporate Climate Change Action Plan
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Ahmad Bostan
<b>Director:</b>	Director for Regeneration and Growth, Tony McGovern
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Climate Change Programme Manager, Jo Miskin jo_miskin@sandwell.gov.uk

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Climate Change Action Plan as set out in Appendix 5 be approved.
- 1.2 That Cabinet recommend to Council that a cross-party Member Committee on Climate Change be formally established as part of the Governance Arrangements to monitor the implementation of the draft Climate Change Action Plan.


## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Action Plan is designed to embed climate change across the council's corporate agenda and service areas to enable us to deliver the actions set out in the Climate Change Strategy and become a net zero organisation by 2030 and net zero borough by 2041.
- 2.2 Tackling climate change in Sandwell will provide many co-benefits to the borough which align with our corporate objectives around investment, regeneration, reducing poverty, and maximising job opportunities in the green sector.





2.3 Tackling climate change is a key area of council business; therefore, it is proposed that Cabinet considers annual progress reports from the Climate Change Programme Board going forward.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people</b></p> <p>Addressing climate change in Sandwell will ensure our borough remains resilient and sustainable for future generations. Action to reduce air pollution levels, creating safer transport options and providing access to more green spaces and job skills will ensure our young people develop in healthier environments, and have opportunities to expand and progress their skills in the green economy.</p>
	<p><b>People live well and age well</b></p> <p>There are multiple health benefits if we tackle climate change in Sandwell. Reducing carbon emissions will result in cleaner air, whilst increasing green spaces will provide cooling effects to residents during heatwaves. Climate change planning will ensure our vulnerable/elderly residents are considered and protected during extreme weather events through regular engagement, community liaison and contingency planning.</p>
	<p><b>Strong resilient communities</b></p> <p>Our mitigation and adaptation measures ensure that Sandwell will be prepared for extreme weather events and associated impacts on our residents, communities and infrastructure.</p>
	<p><b>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods</b></p> <p>Retrofitting existing homes and creating new low carbon homes will create warmer and healthier homes for our residents. We will ensure no-one is left behind by engaging all Sandwell communities in regular climate change engagement.</p>



	<p><b>A strong and inclusive economy</b></p> <p>Tackling Climate Change in Sandwell will create greener jobs in an emerging sector. We will work towards circular economy principles which will tackle both climate change and create new jobs and apprenticeships.</p>
	<p><b>A connected and accessible Sandwell</b></p> <p>Public transport and active travel will be popular choices of transportation around Sandwell in line with our Climate Change Strategy. This ambition is extended across the West Midlands with active travel choices becoming more accessible such as the metro extension reaching more neighbourhoods.</p>

## 4 Background

- 4.1 Climate change is now recognised as the most significant threat that we face to human health. Its impacts are already being felt by communities across the UK and we have strong evidence of how this will be felt by our residents in Sandwell. Indeed climate change adversely impacts upon the poorest communities and so we will have to go further than other areas to protect our residents.
- 4.2 At COP26 in November, further commitments were made by governments to maintain the target of ensuring the earth’s temperature rises by no more than 1.5 degrees. Sandwell can support that target by helping the borough to stay within its own carbon budget. Based on the latest data however, Sandwell (along with many other areas) is significantly at risk of *not* staying within this budget.

### Sandwell’s Climate Change Strategy

- 4.3 The two most pressing issues are for us to reduce our emissions and to help the borough adapt to the impacts of climate change. Our response to these two issues is contained with the [Climate Change Strategy \(2020-2041\)](#) which details actions to tackle Climate Change in the following themes:



- Council Estate and Operations
- The Built Environment
- Transport
- Waste and Recycling
- Adaptation and Resilience
- Natural Capital

## Challenges and Benefits

- 4.4 There are numerous benefits to Sandwell in tackling climate change, many of which are set out in Section 3. We will highlight these benefits when liaising with our communities, business and partners in building their support to tackle climate change.
- 4.5 Tackling climate change will present many challenges to both the council and the borough, however the Action Plan acknowledges these challenges and includes measures to address them accordingly. For example, meeting the borough's 2041 target involves behavioural change from residents, which in turn requires strong communication and the need for clear approach for how we engage with our residents.
- 4.6 A further challenge is to ensure that as the borough moves from its current state into one which is net zero, that this is a 'just transition' in which no one is left behind. The realisation of the benefits in Section 3 will be essential in this process, as will our approach to community engagement.

## Corporate Climate Action Plan

- 4.7 The Action Plan provides the structure for how our Climate Change Strategy will be implemented and is designed to place climate change as a key area of activity within our corporate agenda. It also sets out the council's priorities and approach to tackle climate change over the next few years.
- 4.8 To achieve the council's 2030 target, a clear hierarchy is laid out for the council's estate and operations which are responsible for the majority of our emissions. The proposals set out in the Action Plan focus on the need to mitigate (reduce) our carbon emissions and ensure adaptation measures are implemented in order for Sandwell to become resilient to



the impacts of climate change. The Action Plan focuses on the following themes:

- Council Estate and Operations
- Transport Emissions
- Existing/New Housing Emissions
- Business Emissions
- Household Waste Emissions
- Community Engagement
- Energy
- Air Quality
- Off-setting
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Strategic Partnership
- Natural Environment

4.9 In addition, the council also have a wider influence on the borough which will support our 2041 net zero target. These are:

- Procuring goods and services – working with suppliers and contractors to encourage emission reductions associated with the goods and services they provide.
- Planning & Regeneration – where possible, we grant permission for developments which are compatible with our climate change targets.
- Council housing stock – we can directly influence c.20% of the borough's existing homes.
- Increased travel infrastructure – we can include requirements in planning processes to increase walking, cycling and EV charging infrastructure for new developments.
- Parking charges/levies – we can encourage businesses to support employees transitioning from private car use to public transportation.

## Governance Arrangements

4.10 To ensure climate change is integrated across the council's service areas, a new set of arrangements are proposed to establish a director-led Programme Board, chaired by the Director for Regeneration and Growth. Each directorate will nominate a Service Manager who will be the accountable owner for specified actions (set out in the Climate



Change Strategy) to incorporate into their business planning and will be required to report into the Programme Board.

- 4.11 The Programme Board will be supported by the Climate Change Programme team who will provide technical advice, guidance, and monitoring progress across the council's Service Areas. It is expected that that Programme Board will report quarterly into the Members Steering Group and annually to Cabinet. Financial considerations and decisions will ultimately be made by Cabinet.

## Resources

- 4.12 It is envisaged over the coming years that the Climate Change Programme will develop into a major workstream for the council which will have an impact on current resourcing levels. During 2022, a gap analysis will be conducted to assess the council's ability to implement the Action Plan, followed by a report on available options.
- 4.13 This evidence-based submission will be addressed in the financial year 2023-2024. Previous analysis in this area have detected capacity issues in the following service areas:
- Transport Planning
  - Highways
  - Business Growth
  - Corporate and Borough-wide Energy
  - Natural Capital
  - Community engagement and Communications

## Funding

- 4.14 The council will need to utilise various financial options such as community grants, government schemes and private investments to fund the scale of climate change activities required. In addition to normal routes of borrowing, we also need to consider *green finance* options, which could help to bring in important levels of inward investment to Sandwell. The range of finance options include:
- Community Municipal Bonds
  - Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund



- West Midlands Combined Authority
- Public Sector Demonstrator Fund
- Parking Levies/congestion charges to raise funds for transport improvements

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative is to not produce the climate change action plan which would however, be detrimental to Sandwell's efforts to achieve 2030 and 2041 targets on tackling climate change.

## 6 Implications

- 6.1 At this stage, the Action Plan is not a costed plan, however it is already widely understood that to reach net zero by 2030 and for the borough to reach net zero by 2041, a significant investment is needed in the both the council's and borough's assets. The Programme Board will focus its initial attention on establishing several of the initial cost implications for the council and will report back into cabinet with the relevant budget requests.

## 7 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Governance Arrangements

Appendix 2 - Climate Change Steering Group Terms of Reference

Appendix 3 - Notable exemplars

Appendix 4 - Sandwell MBC's Climate Change Strategy 2020 – 2041

Appendix 5 – Corporate Climate Change Action Plan

## 8 Background Papers

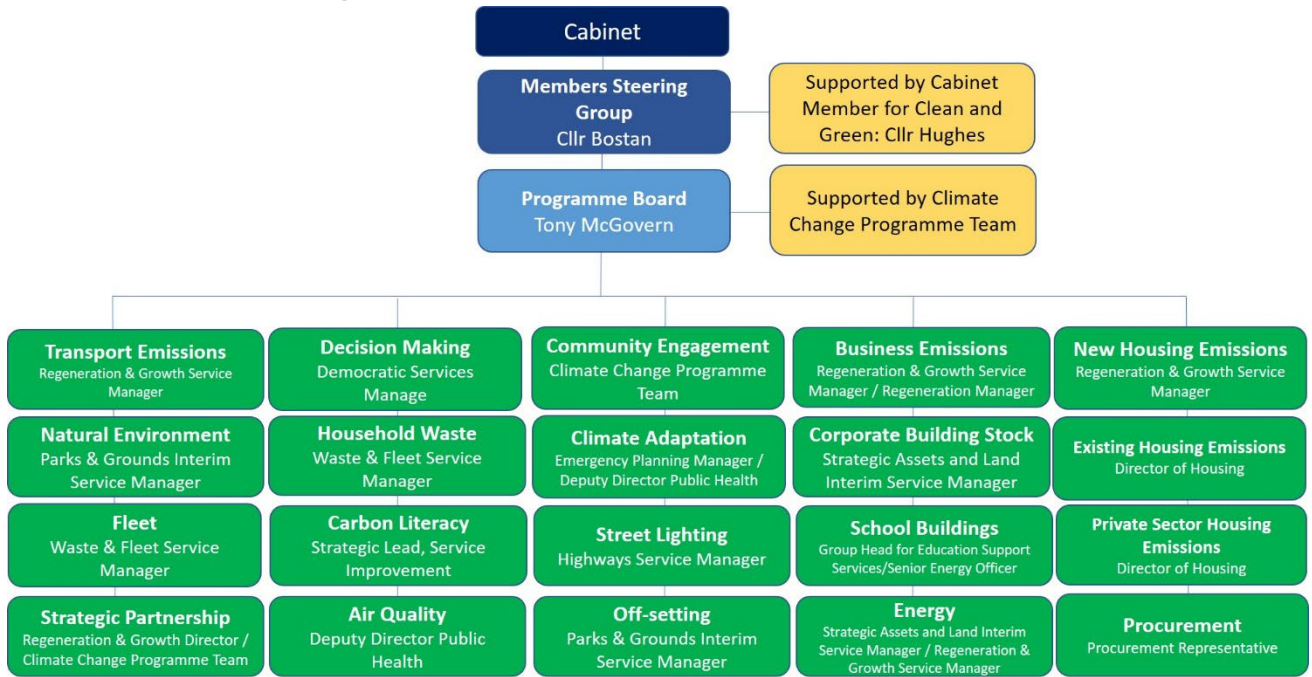
None



# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Governance Arrangements





## Appendix 2

# Climate Change Steering Group Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Climate Change Steering Group is to provide staff and external stakeholders with assistance and advice on the development of projects and policies concerning climate change that will enable Sandwell to become carbon neutral in 2041.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 Climate change represents a significant risk to the population of Sandwell and the council therefore has a moral responsibility to ensure we mitigate the risks to our population, as well as maximising any opportunities (such as reduction in excess winter mortality and the growth in the green economy). In January 2020 Sandwell Council will consult on a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy that will outline a road map for the borough to become carbon neutral in, no later than, 2041.

### 3. Terms of Reference

The function of this group is:

- 3.1 To champion positive and constructive actions to support the climate change agenda across the Council's operations and actions, as well as the wider borough and to work with relevant regional and national organisations.
- 3.2 To act as the Council's principle point of reference and advice for matters relating to the reduction of carbon emissions and adaptation to the effects of climate change.
- 3.3 To facilitate the implementation of the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2030, it's delivery, monitoring and review.
- 3.4 To respond and contribute to the climate change targets set regionally and nationally.

### 4. Membership

- 4.1 The group will be comprised of councillor and officer representatives of Council directorates in addition to external stakeholders with specialised knowledge and capabilities in relation to climate change.



## 5. Meetings

- 5.1 Initially, meetings will be held a monthly basis. The quantity of meetings will be subject to review following the preliminary group meetings.
- 5.2 Meetings will take place at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury. An alternative location may be chosen when appropriate.
- 5.3 The format of all meetings will include updates from a representative of the specified directorates/departments.
- 5.4 Key actions from the meetings will be recorded and issues escalated to relevant Council members as required to support delivery of projects and policies.

## 6. Review

- 6.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.



## Appendix 3

### Notable exemplars

- Waltham Forest – [Mini-Holland scheme](#)
- Nottingham City Council – [Workplace Parking Levy](#)
- City of York Council – city-wide [Passivhaus housing programme](#)
- East Dunbartonshire Council published a [Carbon Management Plan](#). This report indicates emissions from waste, fleet, business travel and street lighting.
- [Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council](#) have embedded social value in their procurement processes. As part of this, companies bidding for procurement contracts have the opportunity to set carbon reduction and environmental performance.

## Appendix 4

Sandwell MBC's [Climate Change Strategy 2020 - 2041](#)

