



## CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

**Responsible Officer** Mark Barrow, Executive Director Place  
 e-mail: mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258919

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation measures to build resilience are now essential to prevent the worst outcomes of the climate emergency. Following Shropshire Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in May, Council officers and members have been busy considering a range of policies and practical initiatives to mitigate Shropshire Council's carbon footprint and improve the adaptation and resilience of its services in the face of extreme climate events.
- 1.2. This report recommends that Council approve a Climate Change Strategy Framework document which identifies the scale of the challenge, key objectives and principles and a route map for our response. The initial focus will be on the development of a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan containing initiatives to mitigate the Council's own carbon footprint and adapt its services to the challenge of the climate crisis. This will then allow the Council to 'lead by example', using its direct and indirect influence to foster positive changes by other public and private sector organisations, communities and individual residents in Shropshire.
- 1.3. In order to track the Council's carbon management performance, Council is also recommended to approve the preparation of an annual 'budget' for its carbon performance in parallel with established systems for annual reporting on its financial budget. To inform the preparation of the Strategy, and to act on its objectives, the Council have pulled together a Task Force of key officers who are leading various streams of activity across the full range of Council services under the leadership of a senior manager.

### 2. Recommendations

- A. That Council approves the Climate Change Strategy Framework document (Appendix 1);
- B. That Council approves the preparation of an annual Climate Impact Budget which will identify the climate impacts of Council services and major projects and will report on annual performance trends in parallel with the Council's financial budget.

## REPORT

### 3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1. The climate crisis is a serious threat to civilised society and the lives of millions of people both globally and locally. The mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation measures to build resilience is now urgent and essential to prevent the worst outcomes of the climate crisis. There is irrefutable evidence to demonstrate that human activity has already caused approximately 1.0°C of global heating above pre-industrial levels. However, global temperatures are likely to rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels between 2030 and 2052 if the current rate of change continues. A rise of 2°C will have a significant impact on public health, food security, water supply, livelihoods and economic growth (globally and locally). The 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C', published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018 describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector.
- 3.2. We will continue to experience significant rises in sea-levels and more pronounced and frequent episodes of extreme weather effects. Within 50 years there is a global threat to food supply chains and economic systems. The much greater frequency of extreme weather events will significantly increase insurance risks and may make many property assets un-insurable. UK insurers alone hold over £1.8 trillion in invested assets and recent studies identify a high risk that the next global downturn could be triggered by insurance claims. In addition to financial impacts, continued access to adequate energy, water, food and housing are all essential human necessities which affect the health, wellbeing and future resilience of our communities.
- 3.3. The climate crisis therefore represents a significant strategic risk to Shropshire and Council services. This risk is most likely to manifest itself in terms of financial impacts (e.g. operating costs, impacts on the Shropshire economy) and impacts on the health and well-being of staff and residents as service users. In declaring a Climate Emergency on 16 May, Council also resolved that greenhouse gas emission appraisals would be attached to all policy reports and a template and guidelines are being developed to ensure that, once implemented, future policy reports will provide a short but consistent commentary on the climate impacts of the decision proposed. In addition to this, good practice suggests that Council should commit to the preparation of an annual Carbon Impact Budget which will identify the greenhouse gas impacts of Council services and major projects and will report on annual performance trends in parallel with the Council's financial budget.

### 4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. Measures to reduce Shropshire Council's carbon footprint and adapt service delivery to address the impacts of extreme weather events will significantly reduce financial risk and generate very real savings to the public finances as well as delivering on our corporate responsibilities to the environment and our communities.

- 4.2. The independent national Climate Change Committee which advises Government estimates that the annual costs of meeting net-zero emissions are between 1-2% of GDP in 2050. Improving Shropshire Council's carbon performance and resilience will require significant capital investment in energy efficiency and low carbon technologies. However, failing to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and implement climate change adaptation measures represents a significant financial threat to both revenue costs and the value of the Council's capital assets. This means that there is a strong financial incentive for the Council to 'Invest to Save' to mitigate the risk of future costs.
- 4.3. Many measures to reduce dependence on greenhouse gasses also offer opportunities to both generate a financial return and to provide community leadership which highlights the growth potential of new technologies and adaptation measures in the Shropshire context. Such an approach is consistent with the national Clean Growth Strategy (2018) and the Council's adopted Economic Growth Strategy which recognise the opportunity to achieve clean growth which will both increase productivity and help protect our climate and environment.

## **5 Background**

- 5.1 National Government data suggests that Shropshire's current carbon footprint amounted to 1.76 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2017. Shropshire Council is directly responsible for its own carbon performance and for adapting its services to respond to the likely impacts of climate change. The best available data suggests that Shropshire Council's carbon footprint has fallen from around 31,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2012 to around 23,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2017. Whilst this represents only around 1.3% of Shropshire's total carbon footprint, more work is needed to establish an accurate picture. However, in addition to managing its own impact, Shropshire Council also has an important role to play in encouraging behavioural changes which will help to reduce emissions both locally and further afield. Therefore, whilst its initial focus must be on its own performance so that we can 'lead by example', Shropshire Council should also use its direct influence to encourage a rapid transition to net zero greenhouse gasses through its procurement and regulatory decisions on planning and economic growth. Finally, the Council should exercise significant community leadership, using its indirect influence to foster positive changes by other public and private sector organisations, communities and individual residents in Shropshire.
- 5.2 Shropshire Council has already implemented a range of measures to reduce its carbon footprint. This has been achieved through rigorous monitoring of its resource use, energy efficiency measures, waste management and renewable energy generation. For example, there are now 41 solar energy arrays installed across 28 sites. The total greenhouse gas emissions avoided since installation of these arrays is nearly 3,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e with a financial saving to the Council of £1.36m. Further measures such as changes to street lighting and the introduction of zero emissions vehicles are proposed to deliver both a reduction in emissions and financial savings.
- 5.3 At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019, Council considered a motion which recognised that the climate crisis represents a serious threat and that urgent action is needed to prioritise the climate emergency that we face and resolved:

- i. To declare a 'Climate Emergency'.
  - ii. To support the work currently being undertaken by Shropshire Council in this field and reaffirm our support to tackling climate change.
  - iii. To ask the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to encourage Government to be ambitious in its plans for carbon reduction targets, aiming for national carbon neutrality.
  - iv. Attach carbon emission appraisals to all policy reports.
  - v. Create a Climate Action Partnership of stakeholders and the wider community, to partner with the Council to provide advice, support and encouragement to public, business and charitable organisations to adopt similar policies and practices across the county. This is to be taken and considered by the appropriate Task and Finish Group.
  - vi. To review its progress on addressing the climate emergency annually, with a view of setting an ambition target for Shropshire Council to be being carbon neutral.
- 5.4 Since May, the cross-party Task and Finish Group on Climate Change and the Climate Change Officer Working Group have been busy considering a range of existing and potential policies and practical initiatives to reduce Shropshire's carbon footprint and to improve adaptation and resilience in the face of extreme climate events. The Council has committed to producing a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan which will set out how Shropshire Council proposes to mitigate and adapt to the challenge of the climate emergency, including the identification of the scale of the work required to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions for the council's activities. To inform its preparation, and to act on its objectives, the Director of Place has now assembled a Task Force of key officers who are leading various streams of activity in this area of work across the full range of Council services and has appointed Adrian Cooper to lead this work.
- 5.5 The Climate Change Strategy Framework (attached as Appendix 1) establishes an overall goal of making Shropshire Council net greenhouse gas neutral by 2030 and sets out:
- i. The Climate Crisis Risks to Shropshire Council's services;
  - ii. Shropshire Council's baseline greenhouse gas performance including a graphic illustrating the scale of the challenge facing us;
  - iii. A review of the carbon initiatives which are already being planned and implemented, together with the greenhouse gas reductions which they have generated;
  - iv. A set of clear objectives and principles to guide corporate actions on greenhouse gas reduction, mitigation and adaptation measures including a 2030 target date for zero greenhouse gas emissions;
  - v. A description of the process and programme through which the Council will take its response to the Climate Emergency forward.

- 5.6 The Framework identifies a number of key themes where both direct and indirect interventions to reduce Shropshire's carbon footprint and improve its resilience to the climate crisis will have the greatest effect, including:
- i. **Demand management** (Direct impact on SC Buildings and property; Indirect impact through the regulation of other development): 'Hard' measures (physical or technology changes) to reduce the consumption of energy and water and waste production and 'Soft' measures such as staff training and optimising control systems;
  - ii. **Transport and travel:** (Direct impact through SC fleet management and staff policies; Indirect impact through regulatory roles): Support measures which reduce the need or impact of travel such as the planned distribution of future growth and SC staff flexible and agile working policy. Support active travel and invest in infrastructure which enables the rapid take up of electric and ultra-low emission vehicles;
  - iii. **Renewable energy generation and storage:** (Direct impact on SC Buildings and property; Indirect impact through joint ventures with other organisations): Potential for solar arrays, wind turbines, hydro-electric power, battery or heat storage solutions and heat networks on Council land and buildings to help meet corporate and community energy needs;
  - iv. **Sustainable land management:** (Direct impact on SC land holdings; Indirect impact through regulatory roles and working with other landowners): Multiple benefits may be generated including carbon capture and storage, reduced flood and drought risk, wildlife gains, positive impacts on human health and wellbeing and adaptation measures to mitigate risks from extreme climate events;
  - v. **Clean and inclusive growth:** (Direct impact on the development of SC buildings and property; Indirect impact through procurement, regulation and working with others): Our county needs to grow while our emissions shrink and we need to save energy and resources without reducing shared prosperity. Support skills investment and business growth which accelerates Shropshire's transition to a low carbon economy and investment in low carbon infrastructure;
  - vi. **Adaptation and resilience:** (Direct impact on delivery of SC services; Indirect impact through procurement, regulation and working with others): Further changes to the climate are now inevitable, and the frequency of extreme weather is likely to increase. The physical infrastructure and staff of Shropshire Council and other public and private sector organisations will require investment to allow services to adapt and become more resilient in the face these changes.

### *Next Steps*

- 5.1 Subject to Council approval, the Climate Change Task Force will use the Strategy Framework (Appendix 1) to develop and consult on a draft Climate Emergency Strategy. The consultation findings will then be reported to Council, together with a final version of the Strategy. Once adopted, the Strategy will be implemented through a 'live', publicly accessible Action Plan which will:

- Prioritise the investments and interventions which will make the most cost-effective contribution to in reducing Shropshire Council’s carbon footprint and building resilience to the climate crisis;
- Allow Shropshire Council to lead by example and provide community leadership;
- Adopt the principles outlined in the Climate Emergency Strategy

5.8 A draft timetable for the next stages of work is identified below.

Draft Climate Emergency Strategy	Spring 2020
Public Consultation	Spring 2020
Adopted Climate Emergency Strategy	Summer 2020
‘Live’ Climate Change Action Plan	Summer 2020 onwards

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change

**Local Members**

All

**Appendices**

1. Climate Change Strategy Framework Document