



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Cabinet 14 December 2020

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

## **CORPORATE CLIMATE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2021**

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### **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. Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and adopted a Climate Strategy Framework, which established the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance for Shropshire Council by 2030 in December 2019. An internal officer working group was established in April 2019 and the Climate Change Task Force was established to lead the Council's response in November 2019.
- 1.2 The early efforts of the Task Force have been directed towards embedding climate change as a key consideration in the Council's strategies and corporate governance systems. Considering the impact of our activities on the climate has been adopted as one of the eight organisation principles for the council. A range of projects and initiatives are being developed to help the Council improve its own performance and to demonstrate 'leadership by example' to help foster similar action across the wider economy and communities in Shropshire. The Task Force has strongly supported the establishment of the new community-led Shropshire Climate Action Partnership (SCAP) which is leading efforts to tackle carbon emissions across the county as a whole.
- 1.3 A commitment was given at Council in December 2019 to consult on a draft Climate Emergency Strategy and report the findings to Council with a final version of the Strategy. Since that commitment was given, we have revised our consultation approach to reflect changing circumstances. Preparation of the draft corporate Climate Strategy (Appendix 1) has already drawn on community engagement through the Council's quarterly Sustainability Forum and summarises the best available information about the Council's current direct and indirect carbon emissions and identifies the scale of reductions and residual offsetting which will be required to reach our objective of net-zero performance by 2030. The Action Plan element of the document reflects the findings of a community engagement workshop in February 2020 and identifies a range of potential actions and a pipeline of specific projects to help deliver progress.
- 1.4 However, we are facing a climate emergency and urgent action is therefore required. This is a fast-moving area of work and information about climate

change, carbon performance and management technologies is changing all the time. In these circumstances it is not proposed to hold a formal consultation process on the Strategy as originally proposed, but instead to publish the corporate Strategy as a 'live' document with a general invitation for public comments and suggestions for amendment which can be taken into account as part of an annual monitoring and review process. Subject to the views of Cabinet, the corporate Strategy and Action Plan will be recommended for approval by Council on 17<sup>th</sup> December.

## **2. Recommendations**

- A. That Cabinet recommend that Council approves the Corporate Climate Emergency Strategy, Action Plan and Project Pipeline 2020 (Appendices 1 and 2);

## **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 nationally 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. Even if we are successful in mitigating the worst effects, we will continue to experience 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 disrupt financial markets. In addition to financial impacts, Climate Change threatens continued access to adequate energy, water, food and housing which are all essential human necessities which affect the health, wellbeing and future resilience of our communities.
- 3.2 The climate crisis therefore represents a significant strategic risk to Shropshire and the delivery of Council and public 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.
- 3.3 Taking active steps through the adoption of a corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan and supporting wider community efforts will allow the Council to make a demonstrable contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the wider county, as well as 'leading by example' by reducing its own carbon footprint. Through its regulatory role and procurement decisions, Shropshire Council is in a position to make a strong positive contribution to help the wider Shropshire community make a positive transition to a low carbon future.
- 3.4 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) has been carried out on the draft documentation. This screening indicates that the corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan are likely to have a positive effect on all groups in society and is intended to do so, given its objective of addressing Shropshire Council's contribution to the climate emergency. The climate

emergency will have significant impacts on the whole of Shropshire and all its diverse communities, from those living or working in our rural areas to those living or working in our market towns, as well as those that travel into our county and across our porous borders.

- 3.5 The Corporate Climate Strategy is expected to generate a positive impact in equality terms and in terms of health and well-being, for:
- Council staff and service users, and partner agency staff;
  - Children and young people and vulnerable households across Shropshire including families, older people and people on low incomes who are likely to be most susceptible to adverse impacts from extreme weather events;
  - People living in rural households who are off the energy grid;
- 3.6 It is not possible at this stage to say with certainty what the likely impacts of the new corporate strategy will be upon specific sectors of the Shropshire economy and upon groupings within the community. Council officers will continue to work with local Parish Councils and Town Councils, community groups and elected Members to communicate the rationale for actions to address the climate emergency and to help mitigate or enhance potential impacts on specific parts of the community.
- 3.7 Individual Council services will need to engage with their staff and service users to explore the need for, and implications of, service changes which may result from the adoption of carbon reduction measures. The Council will need to keep abreast of national good practice in order to maximise opportunities for equality and social inclusion within the overall policy context of addressing the climate emergency.

#### **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 potentially generate revenue savings as well as delivering on our corporate responsibilities to the environment and our communities. Improving Shropshire Council's carbon performance and resilience will however require significant capital investment in energy efficiency, low carbon technologies and renewable energy generation.
- 4.2. Access to the Council's Capital Programme will be pursued where projects will be appraised on an individual basis following the process detailed in the Capital Strategy. Each initiative in the climate strategy would need to be evaluated on its own merits prior to inclusion in the Capital Programme. Some projects delivered in partnership with others may lead to commercial income being generated.
- 4.3. However, failing to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and implement climate change adaptation measures represents a financial threat to both revenue costs and the value of the Council's capital assets. This means that there is an incentive for the Council to 'Invest to Save' to mitigate the risk of future costs.
- 4.4. 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 ‘clean growth’ economic potential of new technologies and adaptation measures in the Shropshire context.

## 5. Climate Change Appraisal

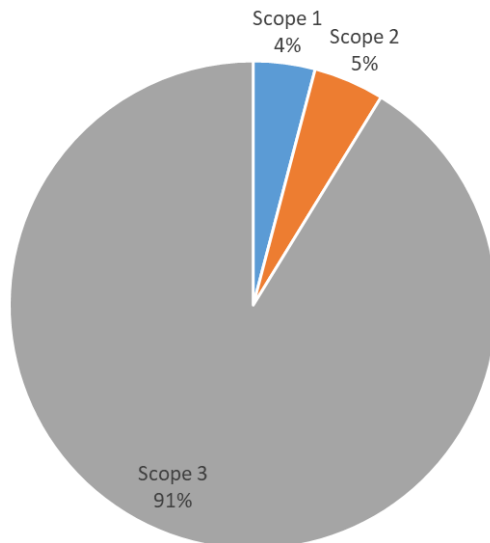
- 5.1 **Energy and fuel consumption:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of actions to improve energy efficiency and carbon performance across Council Services;
- 5.2 **Renewable energy generation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of additional generation of renewable energy from a range of technologies on Council land and buildings;
- 5.3 **Carbon offsetting or mitigation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of efforts to capture and store carbon and to mitigate the effects of climate change on biodiversity through the management of Council land;
- 5.4 **Climate Change adaptation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of efforts to ensure that Council services and assets are resilient in the face of the challenges of more extreme weather events.

## 6. Background

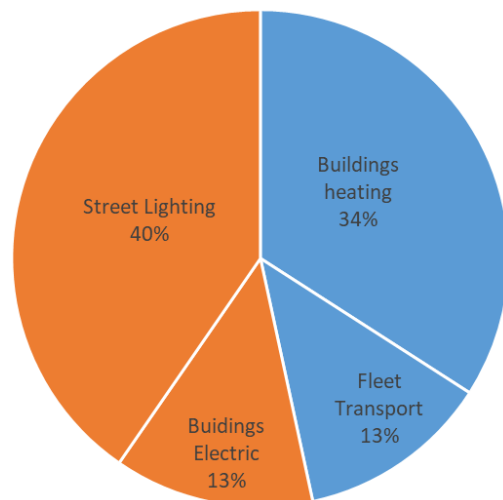
### *Corporate Carbon Footprint 2019*

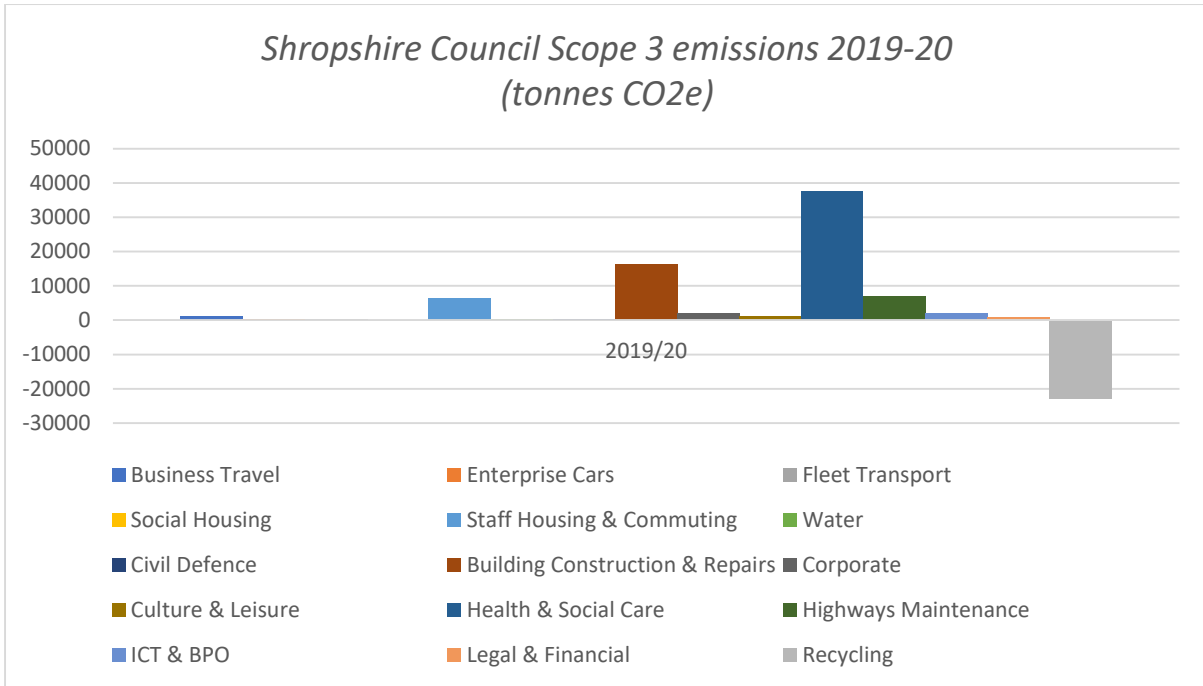
- 6.1 The best available data suggests that Shropshire Council’s carbon footprint (Scope 1 & 2) has fallen from around 12,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2017 to around 5,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019. The Council’s indirect emissions (Scope 3) are assessed as being around 50,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019 (see charts below). Whilst the Council’s footprint represents only around 1% of Shropshire’s total carbon footprint, work is ongoing to refine performance data and establish an accurate picture to support annual monitoring.

*Shropshire Council Carbon Footprint 2019-20 (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e)*



*Shropshire Council Scope 1 & 2 emissions 2019-20 (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e)*





6.2 The graphs above show that the majority of the Council’s carbon emissions are generated from indirect activity, such as services which are commissioned from commercial providers, the repair and maintenance of its buildings and from staff housing and commuting. The waste management contract operated by Veolia generates a net carbon saving of around 23,000 tonnes mainly because of the high levels of recycling in the county. The Council’s current carbon footprint is already offset to some extent through carbon capture and storage on land holdings such as countryside sites, which in total currently capture and store around 2,000 tonnes CO2e per year.

6.3 Shropshire Council was already working to reduce its’ carbon footprint and direct impact on the climate prior to the declaration of a climate emergency in May 2019. An internal officer working group was established in April 2019 and the Climate Change Task Force was established under the leadership of Adrian Cooper in November 2019. A Climate Strategy Framework, which established the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance for Shropshire Council and set out the scale of the challenge, key objectives and principles and a route map for our response was approved by Council in December 2019. An update on progress was reported to Performance Management Scrutiny Committee in July 2020.

*Climate Task Force - Progress to Date*

6.4 The early efforts of the Task Force have been directed towards embedding and normalising climate change as a key consideration in the Council’s culture, strategies and corporate governance systems. This is reflected in the fact that climate action appraisals are now an integral part of all committee reports and major development and investment projects. Key staff from across the full range of council services have been provided with carbon literacy training to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to broaden ownership of the issue and improve our corporate performance.

6.5 Alongside these initiatives, the Task Force is supporting the development of a wide range of projects to ‘power down’ energy consumption for Council buildings and transport, ‘power up’ the generation of renewable energy on Council land and buildings and support the capture and storage of carbon on Council-managed land. The current pipeline of projects is described as part of the Action Plan attached in Appendix 2, but of particular note are:

- i. Work to assess the feasibility of a 2 MW solar farm on the former landfill site at Maesbury Road, Oswestry, which could supply electricity direct to local companies in the neighbouring industrial estate;
- ii. Work to assess the feasibility of the manufacture of ‘green’ hydrogen as a vehicle fuel for heavy commercial vehicles in both the Council’s fleet and that of its contractors, using electricity from the Battlefield Energy Recovery Facility.

Future progress with these and subsequent projects will be reported as part of an annual monitoring and review process.

## 7. Corporate Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2021

7.1 A copy of the draft Strategy is attached as Appendix 1. Its key features are summarised in the Table below. A copy of the Action Plan and Project Pipeline is attached as Appendix 2 and identifies a range of potential actions and a pipeline of specific projects, both for the forthcoming 12 months and those that are under development for the longer term.

### *Summary of Corporate Strategy*

Theme	2030 Objective	Planned Measures
Power Down: Buildings Energy	Reduce 2019 annual emissions by 50% to 2,360 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationalise the number of buildings to only those essential for the sustainable delivery of Council Services (Corporate Asset Management Strategy);</li> <li>• Reduce energy demand from our buildings through a comprehensive programme of fabric and technology upgrades;</li> <li>• Performance monitoring and control systems, together with staff and user training;</li> <li>• Meet the residual energy demand from renewable energy and carbon neutral sources;</li> <li>• Construct new buildings to Passivhaus standard, wherever possible and viable.</li> </ul>
Power Down: Transport and Travel Energy	Reduce 2019 annual emissions by 70% to 1,930 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need for staff travel through improved access to local office facilities and greater home working and normalising the use of IT and communications technology wherever possible;</li> <li>• Encourage the use of active modes and public transport for shorter journeys;</li> </ul>

Theme	2030 Objective	Planned Measures
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressively replace Council Fleet vehicles with those powered by Ultra-Low emission fuels such as electricity and hydrogen;</li> </ul>
Power Down: Commissioned Services	Reduce 2019 annual emissions by 65% to 27,686 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update procurement policies to highlight the importance of carbon performance as a consideration in procurement;</li> <li>Work with the suppliers of goods and services to reduce indirect (Scope 3) carbon emissions;</li> </ul>
Power Down: Resource consumption and waste	Reduce annual carbon emissions from water consumption and waste generation by 70% to 9 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e by 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce water consumption through a comprehensive retrofit programme of Council buildings;</li> <li>Introduce performance monitoring and control systems, together with staff and user training;</li> <li>Actively promote the procurement of recycled materials and the re-use and recycling of waste materials.</li> </ul>
Power Up: Renewable Energy Generation	Shropshire Council to become energy self-sufficient by 2030 for buildings and travel: 60 mW*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Council land and building assets for renewable energy generation potential;</li> <li>New-build and retrofitted buildings to maximise energy self-sufficiency;</li> <li>Where energy cannot be used to power Shropshire Council services direct, work with other public sector organisations and local businesses to explore how renewable energy generation from Council land and buildings could help to meet their energy needs and generate carbon credits.</li> </ul>
Carbon capture and storage:	Increase 2019 performance by 4,509 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e to 27,686 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Veolia to further increase existing positive carbon performance of commissioned municipal waste management;</li> <li>Review Council owned land for opportunities to increase existing capture and storage of carbon through e.g. tree planting, wetland creation and management;</li> <li>Work with farmers, landowners and land managers to develop initiatives to capture and store any residual corporate carbon footprint.</li> </ul>

\* Estimated power production requirement; assumes 25% efficiency gain and that all buildings are converted from fossil fuel heating and all travel by electric vehicles ;

- Strategy relates to Shropshire Council corporate carbon emissions only;
- Based on best available data for 2019 performance;
- Based on current technologies;
- Separate Climate resilience and adaptation strategy will be required.

- 7.2 Climate Change is a rapidly evolving area of work and the Strategy will almost certainly need to be reviewed and modified in future years to reflect technology changes and enhanced data.

#### *Carbon Budget*

- 7.3 Shropshire Council has agreed the principle of preparing 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. The starting point for this budget is our current corporate footprint, and the corporate Strategy illustrates a trajectory and the indicative annual targets for future years which will be required to achieve the objective of net-zero performance by 2030. The level of annual reduction required is similar to the percentage reductions achieved in recent years (see paragraph 6.1 above).

### **8. Shropshire Climate Action Partnership**

- 8.1 In addition to efforts to tackle its own carbon emissions, and as a key community leader, Shropshire Council is one of the key founders and supporters of the community-led 'Shropshire Climate Action Partnership' (SCAP) which has set the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance across Shropshire by 2030 and an initial target of preparing a county-wide Climate Strategy and Action Plan by the end of 2020. Further information is available here: <https://zerocarbonshropshire.org/> The Partnership is being supported by volunteers drawn from a wide range of business sectors and communities across Shropshire and has established a number of Technical Working Groups to develop a vision and actions for topic areas including:

- Land and biodiversity
- Energy
- Buildings
- Transport
- Consumption and resources
- Carbon tracking and reporting

### **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1 Whilst the transition to net-zero performance will not be easy or quick to achieve, a positive start has been made to identifying the scale of the challenge and putting in place some of the mechanisms and actions which will be required to deliver it. Annual monitoring and review will report the Council's future progress and performance.



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

Shropshire Council Climate Change Strategy Framework (December 2019)

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Dean Carroll

**Local Member**

All

**Appendices**

1. Shropshire Climate Change Strategy;
2. Shropshire Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline