



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Communities Overview Committee 25 January 2021

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

CORPORATE CLIMATE 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 and Action Plan, which establishes the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance for Shropshire Council by 2030 in December 2020. 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 During 2020, the efforts of the Task Force were directed towards developing a corporate strategy and 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. Shropshire Council is also a founder and key supporter 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 The adopted corporate Climate Strategy 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 identifies a range of potential actions and a pipeline of specific projects to help deliver progress. This is a fast-moving area of work and the Action Plan has therefore been published as a 'live' document with a general expectation that it will require frequent updating.

2. Recommendations

- A. That the Communities Overview Committee supports the Corporate Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline 2020 (Appendix 1) as a 'live' document which will be updated frequently to reflect rapid changes in technology and resources which are expected to influence this work;

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 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 adopt an agile approach 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

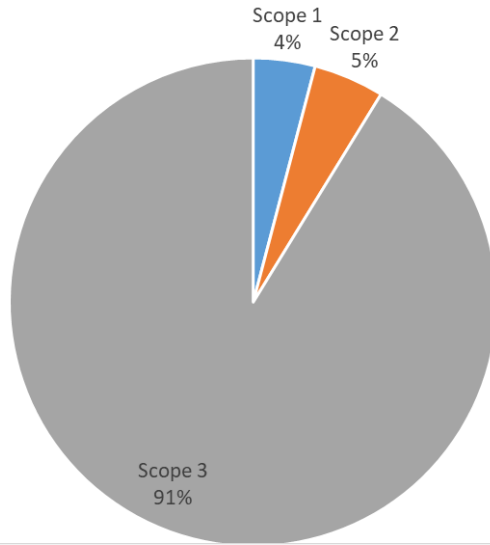
- 5.1 **Energy and fuel consumption:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to drive the delivery of actions to improve energy efficiency and carbon performance across Council Services;
- 5.2 **Renewable energy generation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan 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

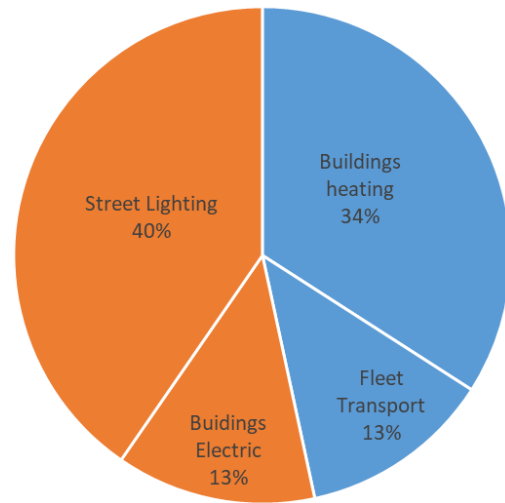
Corporate Carbon Footprint 2019

- 6.1 The best available data suggests that Shropshire Council's carbon footprint (Scope 1 & 2) has fallen from around 12,000 tonnes CO₂e in 2017 to around 5,000 tonnes CO₂e in 2019. The Council's indirect emissions (Scope 3) are assessed as being around 50,000 tonnes CO₂e 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.

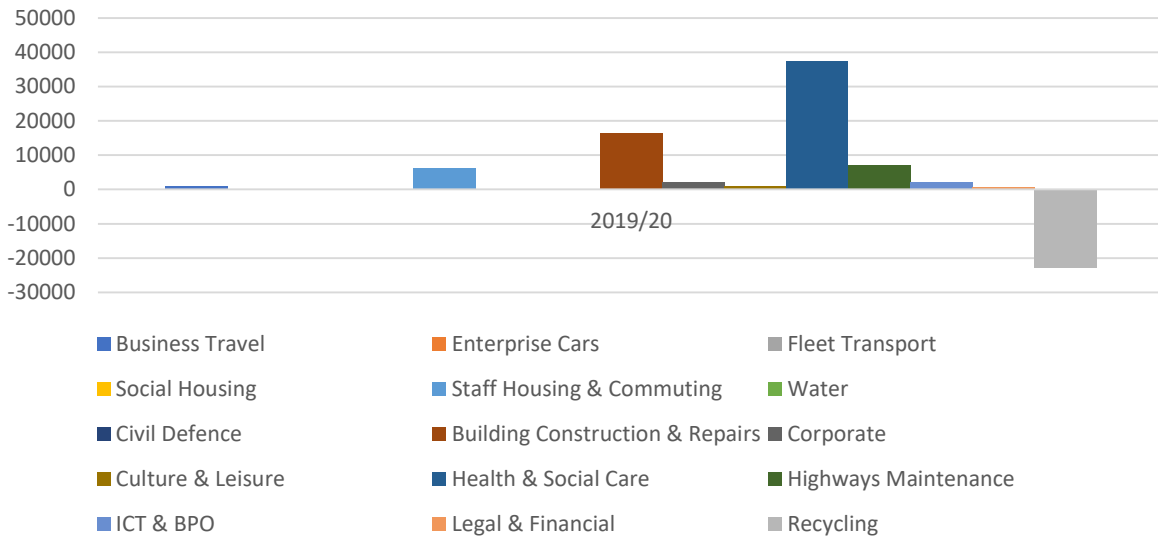
Shropshire Council Carbon Footprint
2019-20 (tonnes CO₂e)



Shropshire Council Scope 1 & 2
emissions 2019-20 (tonnes CO₂e)



Shropshire Council Scope 3 emissions 2019-20
(tonnes CO₂e)



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 – Role and Resources

- 6.4 The principal role of the Task Force is to inform, challenge and co-ordinate climate and carbon management actions across the full range of Shropshire Council Services. The Task Force currently has a manager and 2.5 full time staff, but both supports and is supported by a large number of other staff across the Council, through an internal ‘Climate Officer Group’. Reflecting the scope of the work outlined in the Action Plan, the Task Force plans to recruit more staff during 2021 to increase the capacity and capability of the team.
- 6.5 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. Alongside commissioning feasibility developing its Task Force staff are contributing directly to the development of a wide range of strategies including the Local Plan, the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and the Leisure Services Strategy. Staff also contribute to the project boards which have been established to manage development projects such as those at Greenacres Farm, the Quarry Pool and school’s development projects.
- 6.6 Alongside these initiatives, the Task Force is supporting the development of a wide range of projects across the full range of Council services 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.

7. Corporate Climate Action Plan 2021

- 7.1 A copy of the corporate Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline is attached as Appendix 1 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. 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.

- 7.2 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 individual 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 recently drafted an initial county-wide Strategy and Action Plan for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.
- 8.2 Whilst most of the actions in the current corporate Action Plan focus on projects and initiatives which we help Shropshire Council to reduce its own footprint and thereby provide 'Leadership by Example', some actions will also actively foster 'green growth', innovation and improved performance in the wider Shropshire community and economy. Shropshire Council staff will continue to work with SCAP to support wider improvements through the deliver of our services and regulatory roles.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Whilst the transition to net-zero performance will not be easy or quick to achieve, we face a climate emergency and it is crucial to take early action and build momentum. The recently adopted Action Plan sets out an initial list of projects and initiatives, but significant agility will be required if we are to take advantage of funding opportunities and rapid changes in technology and good practice and the Action Plan has therefore been prepared as a 'live' document which will be updated frequently.

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 (December 2020)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Dean Carroll

Local Member

All

Appendices

1. Shropshire Climate Action Plan and Project Pipeline