



<u>Committee and Date</u>
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<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

Establishment of a Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board

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1. Synopsis

This report recommends the establishment of an Advisory Board to act as a 'critical friend' and to assist the implementation and review of the Council's Corporate Climate Strategy & Action Plan 2020.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The climate crisis represents a significant strategic risk to Shropshire and the delivery of Council and public services. Shropshire Council's adopted Climate Strategy sets out a strategy to achieve the objective of achieving net-zero carbon performance for Shropshire Council by 2030. The associated corporate Action Plan identifies a range of projects which will allow the Council to lead by example' by reducing its own carbon footprint whilst also making a demonstrable contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the wider county by supporting the development of strategic infrastructure and local action by businesses and communities.
- 2.2 The Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Advisory Board will discuss, suggest review and recommend projects and initiatives to improve the carbon performance and climate resilience of Council assets and services, as well as supporting wider community and business efforts to decarbonise Shropshire. The Board will ensure that a structured and corporate-led approach supports the successful delivery of the adopted climate strategy, striking an appropriate balance between managing climate risks and financial costs, exploring positive opportunities for growth and operational service delivery. The Board will also review co-ordination with and support for climate and carbon reduction projects and initiatives by local communities and businesses.
- 2.3 The Board will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Ian Nellins and its membership will be drawn from representatives of each of the political groups on Shropshire Council and Council officers, together with representatives of the community-led Shropshire

Climate Action Partnership, the Shropshire Association of Local Councils and the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. Attendance from other relevant organisations may be requested, subject to the views of the Portfolio Holder.

- 2.4 As part of its informal inception meeting (30 August) the Board agreed a themed forward programme of meetings, to allow it to focus on the different elements of this very broad agenda. The Board also felt that it was important to share and receive information from stakeholders who are undertaking climate change projects and work.

3 Recommendations

That members approve the establishment and Terms of Reference of a Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board

REPORT

4 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 The climate crisis is a serious threat to 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 20 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 Taking active steps through the adoption of a corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan and supporting wider community efforts enables 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.

- 4.4 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) has been carried out which indicates that the adopted corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan is 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.
- 4.5 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;
- 4.6 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.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Measures to reduce Shropshire Council's carbon footprint and adapt service delivery to address the impacts of extreme weather events may help to reduce future financial risk as well as delivering on our corporate commitment to the environment and our communities. Improving Shropshire Council's carbon performance and resilience may also require investment in energy efficiency, low carbon technologies, renewable energy generation, and other new ways of working.
- 5.2 In considering the financial implications of climate change and climate change mitigation measures, the Council will need to consider relevant costs and benefits over longer timeframes.
- 5.3 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 'clean growth' economic potential of new technologies and adaptation measures in the Shropshire context.

6 Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 **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;
- 6.2 **Renewable energy generation:** The corporate Climate Strategy and Action Plan has been developed to drive the delivery of additional generation of renewable energy from a range of technologies on Council land and buildings;
- 6.3 **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;
- 6.4 **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.

7 Background

- 7.1 The Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Advisory Board will discuss, suggest review and recommend projects and initiatives to improve the carbon performance and climate resilience of Council assets and services, as well as supporting wider community and business efforts to decarbonise Shropshire. The Board will ensure that a structured and corporate-led approach supports the successful delivery of the adopted climate strategy, striking an appropriate balance between managing climate risks and financial costs, exploring positive opportunities for growth and operational service delivery. The Board will also review co-ordination with and support for climate and carbon reduction projects and initiatives by local communities and businesses.
- 7.2 The Board will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Ian Nellins and its membership will be drawn from representatives of each of the political groups on Shropshire Council, together with representatives of the community-led Shropshire Climate Action partnership, the Shropshire Association of Local Councils and the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. The involvement of external stakeholders will help co-ordinate action across different sectors and allow the Council to benefit from the expertise and experience which these stakeholders can provide.
- 7.3 It is expected that the Board will agree a themed forward programme of meetings, to allow it to focus on the different elements of this very broad agenda.
- 7.4 Progress with Climate Change projects and performance was reported to Council on January 2022 as part of the Corporate Carbon Performance Monitoring Report 2021.

- 7.5 The Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board will have no decision-making powers and will work within the governance arrangements of the Council so as to inform and promote the Climate Change agenda. Its full Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 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. The establishment of an Advisory Board will help to share the Council's actions and interventions with a wider audience as well as providing the Portfolio Holder and the Climate Task Force with a valuable additional source of advice and guidance.

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

- Cabinet 19 January 2022 – Corporate Carbon Performance Monitoring Report 2021

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Ian Nellins

Local Member

All

Appendices

1. Climate Change & Carbon Reduction Advisory Board Terms of Reference