

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee 4th July 2023

Review of Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction – Executive Response

Report of the Chair of Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee

Classification	This report is Public
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PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To present to Scrutiny Executive's Response to the completed report for the recent Review of Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. This includes reducing emissions from the devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), which currently account for about 20% of the UK's emissions. The 100% target was based on advice from the CCC's 2019 report, 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming'.
- 1.2 Scrutiny has previously received updates on progress against the Carbon Reduction Plan 2019-30 (CRP) with reports presented to the Customer Service & Transformation and Healthy, Safe, Clean & Green Scrutiny Committees. The original CRP set out 8 thematic areas by which the authority aimed to reduce its carbon emissions.
- 1.3 Following structural changes in 2021/22 and a change in lead officers, the Assistant Director of Property Services & Housing Repairs reviewed the existing action plans and those in use with regional funders. In consultation with the Assistant Director of Development & Planning, a 10 point framework used by the Midlands Engine was identified which would allow the Council's existing themes to be transferred/captured, but would also allow the streamlining of bids for schemes to be aligned with regional and national funders.

- 1.4 It was felt that the framework would allow better compatibility with funders both regionally and nationally. It included additional themes which represented new and emerging technologies that the Council were keen to explore. It also allowed a number of different polices and groups to be brought together so progress could be clearly identified and evidenced, with greater opportunities offered to partners through the Low Carbon Thematic Group and the Bolsover Partnership.
- 1.5 In March 2022, Executive agreed to accept these proposed changes to the CRP and move away from more traditional monitoring to a live document that tracked and evidenced progress across all schemes and or initiatives.
- 1.6 The Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee received a further update in May 2022, following the operational changes to the Council's approach during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.7 Committee Members agreed to complete further detailed work in relation to carbon reduction as part of the 2022/23 work programme in order to evaluate work completed within the current municipal cycle 2019-23, to guide incoming Members on potential future action.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

2.1 The aim of the review was:

- To evaluate the Council's current approach to Carbon Reduction.

2.2 Following a briefing by the current lead officer on progress against the Council's three strands of activity, the objectives agreed were:

- Review of officer capacity and resource
- Review of software platform used to monitor progress against Carbon Reduction Plan
- Assessment of local knowledge of best practice in home energy efficiency
- Clarity over Corporate approach/objectives
- Progress update on current activity across the 3 themes

2.3 The key issues identified for investigation were as follows:

- Resource levels to deliver existing schemes and identify and submit funding bids for new programmes, particularly officer resource and clear budget commitments.
- Data quality to ensure progress is being adequately tracked.
- How the Council could further embed considerations of environmental impact in to service design and delivery.
- Communication – both internal and external, as to what the Council is doing and how this can be supported.

2.4 The key findings arising from the review were:

- There is insufficient officer resource to ensure the carbon reduction agenda is progressed effectively.

- There is a lack of clarity around the Council's current baseline and data quality/monitoring in relation to carbon emissions.
- At present there is limited communication of Council objectives and work being completed to meet our target.
- Widened membership of the Low Carbon Thematic Group would lead to improved cross-communication.
- A clear Member lead at Executive level would create a higher profile for the work required by the Council and provide an Executive level champion alongside the existing Scrutiny Chair champion.

2.5 The Committee put together nine recommendations, as outlined in the appendix, which will hopefully enable the Council to clarify immediate priorities for action, as well as longer term plan to ensure the Council and District is net zero by 2050.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 Members are required to make their report and findings public, in accordance with Part 4.5.17(4) of the Constitution.

3.2 Committee is required to monitor implementation of their recommendations in accordance with Part 3.6(1) of the Constitution.

3.3 Members must note Executive's response to the review recommendations and agree to review progress on the approved recommendations. A progress report is submitted at six and twelve months' intervals, with any exceptions to expected delivery highlighted.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 There are no alternative options. Members are required to note Executive's response to the Review.

4.2 Committee is required to monitor implementation of their recommendations in accordance with Part 3.6(1) of the Constitution and as such the report cannot be rejected.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1 That Members note Executive's Response to the Review of Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction.

2 That Members make its report and findings public, in accordance with Part 4.5.17(4) of the Constitution.

3 That Officers monitor progress on the recommendations and report in six and twelve months' time highlighting exceptions to delivery, in accordance with Part 3.6(1) of the Constitution.

Approved by Executive

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

The recommendations will have cost implications outside of current budgets related to staffing resource. Any proposed changes to facilities/energy management or targeted projects would be subject to a separate report.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

In carrying out scrutiny reviews the Council is exercising its scrutiny powers as laid out in Part 1A, s9F(2) of the Local Government Act 2000.

The Council is committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 as a result of the Climate Change Act 2008.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details:

The recommendations from Scrutiny seek to ensure there is greater clarity on the Council's approach to carbon reduction, with improved data quality, clear objectives and reporting, additional staffing resource and improved communications internal and external.

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

Any changes to the Council's establishment resulting from these recommendations will require approval by the Council's Employment and Personnel Committee. Any budgetary growth implications will require further approval from Council. The Council's policies and procedures will be followed for any recruitment or restructure required.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	No
<p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p>	None
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Details: Relevant Service Managers and Portfolio Holder engaged during the review process.</p>

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.

The Carbon Reduction Plan clearly links into the Environment Ambition but can also have an impact on both Customer and Economy.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
7.1	Review of Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction – Executive Response

Background Papers

(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).

Please contact Scrutiny & Elections Officer where further information is required.