

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT & PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Choose an item.

01 September 2020

Report Title: Climate Change & Sustainable Environment Strategy

Submitted by: Chief Executive

Portfolios: Environment & Recycling

Ward(s) affected: all

Purpose of the Report

For the Task and Finish Group to consider the Council's work on Environmental Sustainability and climate change and to recommend to Full Council further steps to be taken.

Recommendation

Officers recommend that, having considered this report, the Task & Finish Group agree:

- That the Council's record on mitigation and adaptation to climate change be noted.
- That the baseline in respect of the Council's current carbon footprint be noted.
- That the target date for securing carbon neutrality for the borough be aligned with the government target of 2050.
- That the Cabinet's Sustainable Environment Strategy be the vehicle through which all work on climate change, carbon neutrality and environmental sustainability for the borough be channelled.
- To consider the initial proposals in the Draft Sustainable Environment Strategy and make recommendations for other areas of work to be explored.

Reasons

To facilitate the Task & Finish Group discharging the role given to it by the Economy, Environment & Place Scrutiny Committee.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 On the 17 December 2019, a report was submitted by the Chief Executive to the Economy, Environment & Place Scrutiny Committee proposing Terms of Reference for a Task and Finish Group to consider the issue of climate change mitigation.
- 1.2 The Committee resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group, with the following remit and scope:
 - To review the Council's record on mitigation and adaption on climate change and to make recommendations to Cabinet with regard to future action;
 - To establish a baseline in respect of the Council's current carbon footprint;
 - To consider work to date to mitigate the adverse effects of the Council's services;

- To review options and timelines to achieve the target of the Council as an organisation being carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide information, and references to key documents, to assist in the Task & Finish Groups understanding of this area of work, and to bring the group up to date with the Council's work in this area.
- 1.4 Since the Task and Finish Group was established by the EE&P Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet has signalled its intention to establish a Sustainable Environment Strategy. Such a strategy, an initial draft of which is included in Appendix 1 of this report, will address the work of required to deliver against the Council resolution.
- 1.6 National Climate Change targets and policies**
- 1.7 On 12 June 2019 the Government laid the draft Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is also known as a net zero target because some emissions can remain if they are offset by removal from the atmosphere and/or by trading in carbon units. The Order came into force on 27 June 2019.
- 1.8 This legislation broadly puts into effect a May 2019 recommendation from the Committee on Climate Change (the independent statutory body set up to monitor and advise on progress towards the UK's emission targets).
- 1.9 If met, this target would effectively mean that the UK will end its contribution to global emissions by 2050. Before this amendment, the UK had a long-term emissions reduction target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels, set by the Climate Change Act 2008.
- 1.10 An excellent briefing on this issue has been produced by the House of Commons Library and is available on the <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8590/>
- 1.11 Local Climate Change targets and policy**
- 1.12 On 3rd April 2019, the Borough Council, passed a resolution recognising that there is a Climate Emergency and acknowledging that the Council had a part to play in addressing this emergency. The Council agreed a series of actions including an aim for the Borough to become net carbon zero by 2030. This included both Borough Council activities and Borough wide.
- 1.13 The aim by the Borough to become net carbon zero by 2030 preceded the Government's decision which was made in June 2019. Therefore, the two dates are different, with the Borough aiming to achieve carbon neutrality within the next ten years (2030), in contrast to the Government's target which is within the next three decades (2050).
- 1.14 In the report, submitted by the Chief Executive, on the 17 December 2019 – it was pertinently stated:

“Across Staffordshire Councils have set different targets for securing Carbon Neutral status, with target dates ranging from 2030 to 2050 (the govt target). In due course it may be desirable to align the Council's target date with those of other organisations for some specific areas of work.”

- 1.15 It is for the Task and Finish Group to consider the target for securing carbon neutrality, both in its date and scope, and to assess whether this is achievable and credible. It is appropriate to state that, the aforementioned House of Commons briefing (which has been web linked within this note) on the subject matter of an earlier target, states:

“The Committee on Climate Change advised against an earlier target at this time and explained 2050 was an appropriate target.....

- 1.16 *The CCC’s Report goes onto to explain further: We have considered whether an earlier date than 2050 should be targeted. An earlier date has been proposed by some groups and might send a stronger signal internationally to those considering increasing their own ambition, but only if it is viewed as credible. While our scenarios demonstrate that some sectors (e.g. the power sector) could reach net-zero emissions by 2045, for most sectors 2050 currently appears to be the earliest credible date. An earlier date would also give less time to develop currently speculative options as alternatives to make up for any shortfall from other measures. That could lead to a need for punitive policies and early capital scrappage to stay on track to the target.”*

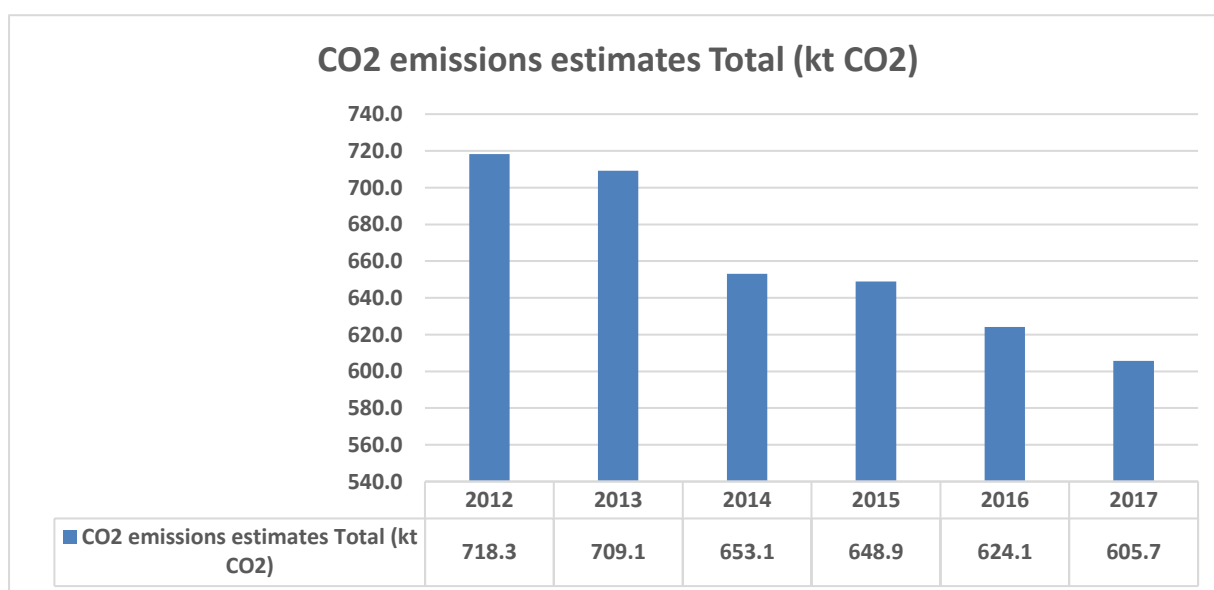
- 1.17 In light of the government target, and in the expectation that any government funding linked to this agenda will be aligned with this date, officers recommend that the Council’s target date be aligned with the government’s target on 2050.

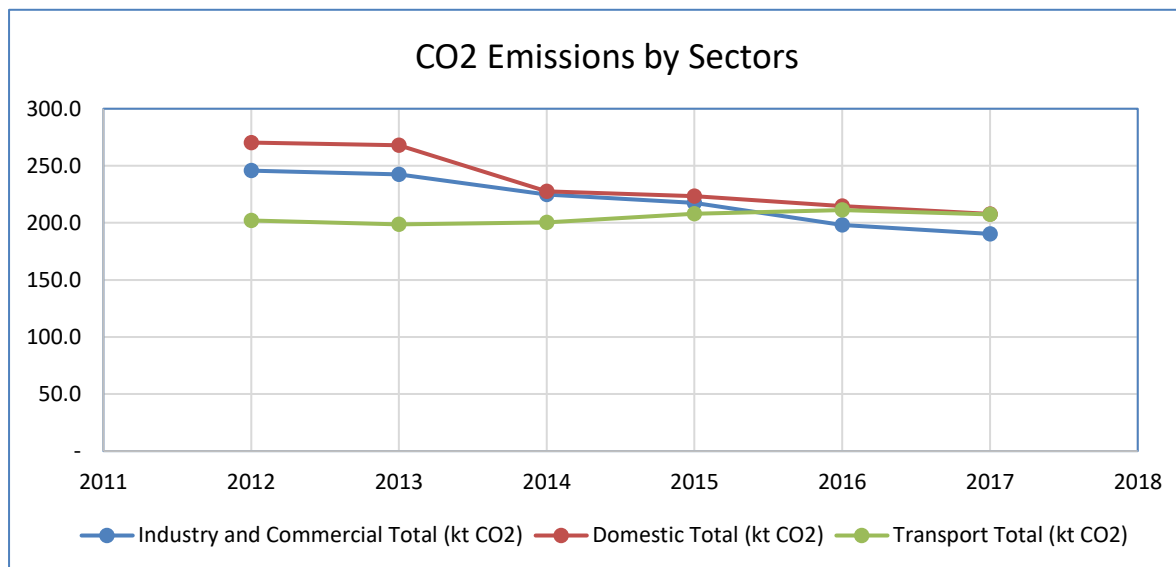
1.18 Our Borough’s current carbon footprint

- 1.19 The Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy produces a breakdown of carbon dioxide emissions by Local Authority area as a subset of its annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions. This is available at: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/emissions-of-carbon-dioxide-for-local-authority-areas>.

Currently, the most recent data set which was published in June 2019, reports on CO2 emission for 2017. As the datasets are released annually, ordinarily, an update would be expected in June 2020, reporting on the year 2018.

- 1.20 The following shows the Borough’s CO2 emission/year in the past 6 years, and reflects year on year reductions in CO2 emissions.





1.21 The Council's Track Record in reducing our carbon footprint

1.22 The Greenhouse Gas Emissions arising from the Council's function is annually reported and has been published since 2012. The most recent report for the year 2018/2019 is available at: <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/IMCE/Housing/Final%20Report%20on%20greenhouse%20gas%20emissions%2020182019.pdf>

1.23 The categories within the emissions report follow a national methodology, which are as follows:

Scope 1: Direct Emissions arising from natural gas usage within the Council Buildings and the fuel used within the Councils' fleet.

Scope 2: Direct Emissions from purchased electricity usage within the Council Buildings and street lighting.

Scope 3: Indirect emissions from activities carried out but not directly controlled by the Council.

1.24 The above scopes, in essence, encapsulate Council operations; energy used within its buildings, transport and procurement.

1.25 The following table which is contained within the 2019/2020 report provides a comparative breakdown of GHG emissions in tonnes for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council:

Comparative Breakdown of GHG emissions in tonnes for Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council				
	2018/2019	2017/18	2016/2017	2015/2016
Scope 1 (Direct emissions)				
Gas consumption	1080	1222*	1098	1159
Owned Transport	1103	1256	1155	909

Total	2183	2478	2253	2068
Scope 2 (Indirect emissions)				
Purchased electricity	485	772*	913	970
Total	485	772	913	970
Significant Scope 3 (Indirect other)**				
Business Travel	45	45	45	45
Employee commuting	302	302	355	355
Waste Disposal from HQ	2	2	2	2
Outsourced Activities	24	24	95	303
Castle House (NBC use of the building as a tenant)***	61	-	-	-
Transmission and Distribution	41	84	78	83
Total	475	457	575	788
Total gross emissions	3143	3707	3741	3826
Credits				
Green Tariff	0	0	0	256
Total net emissions	3143	3707	3741	3570

1.35 Sustainable Environment Plan

1.36 Cabinet has committed to establish Sustainable Environment Plan in order to address both the carbon neutral target and the environmental standards in the borough. An officer working group has been established to formulate this plan, a draft of which is attached at Appendix 1.

1.37 At this stage, the working group have identified a range of potential projects. A fully costed plan with identified carbon emissions saving would require consultancy advice and will need to be developed. The plan is deliberately tightly focussed, recognising that this is an agenda which addresses every aspect of the Council's business and risks myriad small schemes emerging which might be better approached as business as usual.

1.38 Key aspects of the Plan address:

- Policy Development – focussing on three policy areas
 - Local Plan
 - Taxi Policy
 - Air Quality
- Travel, focussing on green travel such as cycling, e-scooters and electric vehicles, and development of the Council's fleet and travel planning
- Assets – ensuring that action is taken across the whole Council estate
- Procurement – building environmental sustainability into contracts with providers of goods and services to the Council

1.39 In addition to this Council focussed plan, which will inevitably impact on the borough as a whole, the Council will continue to work closely with its partners to encourage environmental sustainability for the borough as a whole.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 It is proposed that the Task & Finish Group approve to take the actions recommended in this report

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 To discharge the task set for the group by the Economy, Environment & Place Scrutiny Committee

5. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 None directly arising from this report

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 None directly arising from this report

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 None directly arising from this report

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 None directly arising from this report

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 This is the focus of this report.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Draft Sustainable Environment Strategy