

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO CABINET**

10 September 2024

Report Title: Staffordshire-wide agreement on climate planning policies

Submitted by: Service Director Planning & Service Director Sustainable Environment

Portfolios: Sustainable Environment and Strategic Planning

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To provide information regarding the Staffordshire wide agreement on climate planning policies			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
<p>That Cabinet:</p> <p>1. That Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council becomes a signatory to the Staffordshire planning policy commitments shared statement annexed as Appendix 1 and supports the policy directions and future evidence requirements to support the transition towards achieving net zero carbon emissions for the borough by 2050.</p>			
<u>Reasons</u>			
<p>The purpose of this report is to seek member agreement to a shared statement produced jointly by the Local Planning Authorities in Staffordshire (Appendix 1). The shared statement seeks a commitment to explore the inclusion of proactive policies in emerging local plans to address the declared climate emergency and to undertake additional studies with the aim of improving the evidence base in support of achieving the transition to net zero by 2050.</p> <p>This shared statement builds upon and seeks to implement measures identified in a study commissioned jointly by the Staffordshire Local Planning Authorities 'Climate Change Adoption & Mitigation Final Report 2020' ('the 2020 study').</p>			

1. Background

- 1.1 The UK Government has set legally binding targets to reduce carbon emissions which will occur at pace over the lifetime of emerging and future local plans. As part of the transition to net zero by 2050, the aim is to promote a 78% reduction by 2035. This requirement is reflected in the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that planning should contribute to 'radical reductions' in greenhouse gas emissions (NPPF Paragraph 152).
- 1.2 Staffordshire Local Planning Authorities commissioned a joint study in 2020, the 'Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Final Report'. This study sought to promote a shared approach to addressing climate change and included several planning policy recommendations. A shared statement based on these recommendations to provide a common county-wide approach within individual local plan policies which support the transition towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Across Staffordshire, all ten local authorities have committed through the Staffordshire Leaders Board to work collaboratively to successfully achieve net carbon zero in line with each of the authorities own climate change declarations.
- 1.3 The Staffordshire Sustainability Board (SSB) has been set up to facilitate collaboration on shared sustainability goals and objectives. It consists of respective local authority member Portfolio Holders and senior officers with responsibility for sustainability, supported by a team of advisors drawn from across the Staffordshire authorities. The SSB works to influence change within local authorities as well as other organisations and individuals to ensure that Staffordshire as a county is net zero by at least 2050 or before.
- 1.4 This 'Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Final Report' has been fully endorsed by the SSB, who requested that via its relevant local planning policies, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough becomes a formal signatory of the commitment, alongside all other Staffordshire authorities, in achieving Net Zero.
- 1.5 The emerging Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan includes policy CRE1 'Climate Change' which proposes to a number of requirements including water efficiency targets, the introduction of standards for residential and non-residential developments on energy efficiency and other matters. The policy also supports the Council's Carbon Capture / Tree Planting Strategy. The policy is supported by the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Report from Aecom referenced above. Importantly, the policy approach in the Local Plan has also been supported by the Local Plan Viability Study which has tested policy requirements to ensure they are deliverable over the Plan period. Emerging policy CRE2 'Renewable Energy' provides an appropriate planning policy context for the consideration of solar, wind and other low carbon energy schemes in the Borough.
- 1.6 The Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has worked hard thereafter to reduce its own emissions as a part of its target to reach net zero by 2030 for its own operations. Cabinet has recently approved a refreshed Sustainable Environment Strategy (SES) which sets out actions necessary to reach its targets and looks forward as to how it can help facilitate the wider Borough reaching net zero by 2050. Implementation of planning policy will play

a crucial role in promoting a reduction in emissions in multiple sectors through support for energy efficient construction and buildings, support for renewables and sustainable transport and promoting carbon sequestration.

2. Issues

2.1 It is calculated that 68% of current domestic emissions come from sectors heavily linked to planning including buildings, surface transport, manufacturing / construction, and grid supply. It is vital therefore that suitable planning policies are put in place that direct new development to sustainable locations, encourage and require appropriate construction techniques and the use of suitable materials, and allow occupation and use of buildings in an energy efficient manner.

3. Proposal

3.1 That Cabinet agrees to sign the Council up to the Staffordshire climate planning policy commitment.

4. Reasons for proposed Solution

4.1 The Borough Council has declared a climate change emergency and developed a response to this, including formulating suitable planning policies which will influence how land and property is developed and used in the borough over the next 20 years and beyond. Signing up to the commitment shows that the Council has real intent in combatting climate change and working on a collaborative basis.

5. Options Considered

5.1 The Council could decide it does not feel it is necessary to sign up to the commitment. However, it is considered that this would not show commitment to the intended goals of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board of which the Borough Council is a member.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

6.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 contains the following provisions:

- Carbon targets and carbon budgeting - The Act places the government under a legal duty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- The Committee on Climate Change - The Act also establishes the Committee on Climate Change, an independent, expert body to advise government on the appropriate level for the targets, budgets, and on matters relating to mitigation and adaptation. The Committee will submit

annual reports to parliament on progress towards the targets and the government must respond to this report.

- 6.2 Councils' Duty to reduce carbon emissions - There are currently no statutory requirements for local authorities to set or negotiate targets to reduce their own or area wide emissions. However, the Borough declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019 and has committed to reach net zero for its own operations by 2030 and as a borough by 2050.
- 6.3 The Environment Act 2021 imposes specific environmental targets the delivery of which will help alongside the Climate Change Act 2008 to combat climate change and the effects of carbon emissions on people, animals, habitats and the general environment.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 There are no equality issues associated with this report.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 It is envisaged that the majority of financial costs and the need to employ resources arising from the contents of this report will fall on applicants seeking planning permission. In the case of the Council and its own compliance where development is proposed or the use of land/property linked to delivering climate change objectives costs are built in to the Sustainable Environment Strategy.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1 There are no major risks however implementation of the Council's planning policies in the borough will be dependent on viable development proposals coming forward and being capable of delivery.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



11. Key Decision Information

- 11.1 n/a

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 n/a

13. List of Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1 - Staffordshire's Climate Emergency - planning policy commitments

14. Background Papers

14.1 n/a