



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

10 November 2021

Report Title:	St. Helens Climate Change Response Plan
Cabinet Portfolio	Environment and Transport
Cabinet Member	Councillor Andy Bowden
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	Yes
Public Notice issued	General Exception Notice
Wards Affected	All Wards
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Borough priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	X
	Create a green and vibrant place that reflect our heritage and culture	X
	Be a responsible Council	X

1. Summary

- 1.1 The St Helen's Climate Change response plan reinforces the Council's ambition and commitment to meet its carbon net zero target by 2040. It highlights the early progress made since Cabinet declared a climate emergency in 2019 and identifies the steps now being taken to deliver the net zero pledge.
- 1.2 The Climate Change response plan shows how the Council is demonstrating leadership in tackling the global climate crisis, and how residents, businesses and partners will all play their part in achieving the net zero goal.
- 1.3 The scale of the challenge is huge and this response plan signifies just the start of the journey. It highlights how the Council and society more generally must change how it works, behaves and acts.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) **Approve the St Helens Climate Change response plan included at Appendix 1**
- ii) **Approve the purchase of the UK's first custom built Hydrogen waste vehicle, funded from the approved vehicle replacement programme, and the Waste Management and Climate Fund (previously agreed in principle at Cabinet on 24 February 2021 as part of the strategic capital investment schemes in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021-2024); and delegate authorisation to the Executive Director Place Services and Executive Director Corporate Services to award the contract.**
- iii) **Approve the purchase of 9 replacement refuse collection vehicles as part of the approved Vehicle Replacement Programme, and delegate authorisation to the Executive Director Place Services and Executive Director Corporate Services to award the contract.**
- iv) **Agree in principle to the allocation of additional future funding to support the delivery of the action plan that will be developed over the next 12 months.**

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 This report seeks approval to adopt the Council's Climate Change response plan. The plan reaffirms the Council's commitment to its net zero target by 2040. The plan will be a catalyst to obtain further support, buy in, and funding across the Borough, city region and nationally. The plan represents the start of our carbon reduction journey, it provides greater clarity over how we intend to get to our final net zero destination.

4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

- 4.1 At the meeting of Full council on Wednesday July 10th, 2019, a motion was submitted by Cllr Uddin "Tackling the Climate Change Emergency" in which the council noted the contents of the 'Special Report on Global Warming' published by the intergovernmental panel on Climate Change in October 2018 wherein they outline the enormous harm that a 2-degree Centigrade rise in global temperature is likely to cause compared with a 1.5-degree Centigrade rise. Nevertheless, they say that with ambitious action, it may be possible to limit global warming to the 1.5-degree Centigrade rise. Following this motion, the Council declared a climate emergency.

Progress since climate emergency declaration

- 4.2 In committing to achieve net zero by 2040 the Council recognised the need to work in close partnership with a range of key stakeholders', partners and agencies from the public, private, voluntary and third sector across St Helens. A key part of this was the establishment of a multi-agency Climate Change Commission. This commission brings together academics, influential leaders and key agencies who together can help to oversee the Council's journey to net zero. The Commission has met regularly and is already making a positive impact across multiple themes such as industry, housing and land use.
- 4.3 Despite the devastating impacts of the Covid19 pandemic the Council has continued to modernise and transform. This has included the publication of the #StHelensTogether: Borough Strategy. This strategy puts the climate response at the heart of everything we do. To resource this commitment, we have identified the Director of Operations to lead this important cross cutting theme, we have appointed a dedicated climate change officer and made a significant capital resource available, to kickstart ideas and help the borough to innovate.
- 4.4 Operationally we have delivered several projects and initiatives that are already reducing our carbon emissions. Key successes include
- Converting over 3,500 streetlights to low energy LED lanterns
 - Retiring old, inefficient vehicles across our fleet and replacing them with modern lower carbon vehicles. We are extensively trialling a range of alternatively fuelled vehicles
 - Supported many residents across the borough to replace inefficient boilers with new, modern low energy systems
 - Delivered active travel transport links to encourage people to walk and cycle across the borough
 - We have levered in over £35m of external funding over the past 2 years, with much of this supporting active travel across the borough,
 - Committed up to £1.2m of Council capital funds to support local groups and business to decarbonise their activities
- 4.5 The Council has also worked closely with colleagues at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to progress major energy transition projects that the borough will benefit from in the

years to come. These include both Hynet and Glass Futures. The response plan at Appendix 1 case studies these projects and the impact that they will have in the Borough.

The Response Plan

- 4.6 The Climate change response plan attached at Appendix 1 is split into 2 parts. The first focusses on the Council's own activities. The Council's carbon emission represents only 3% of the total emissions of the Borough. We recognise however that the Council must first get "its own house in order" to demonstrate leadership and generate momentum. The plan sets out several commitments that we will take to reduce our emissions. These commitments will predominantly be progressed over the next 12 months to build confidence and support in achieving the longer term and ambitious net zero targets.
- 4.7 Decarbonising the Council's fleet of vehicles is an essential component of our climate change response. We have successfully trialled several alternatively fuelled vehicles and are now proposing to lead the way in supporting the transition to Hydrogen. We have identified an opportunity to secure the UK's first custom built Hydrogen RCV waste collection vehicle. This will be available in the spring/summer of 2022 and will be a notable landmark in modernizing our fleet. This will be a fully operational vehicle, identical to a small number of other vehicles that have successfully operated in Germany over the past 2 years. We will be retiring our older and inefficient waste collection vehicles. These will be replaced with the most modern Euro 6 engines and provide an affordable option for reducing our current level of emissions.
- 4.8 As part of the partnership, we will work with the vehicle manufacturer to secure additional added value including: -
- Dedicated on-site support and certified training to upskill council employed mechanics in hydrogen and electric vehicle technology.
 - Help to stimulate green skills and growth around hydrogen technology within St Helens.
 - Work in partnership to engage with local businesses and St Helens Chamber to provide training and development of mechanics or organisations looking to diversify.
 - Engage with local colleges and schools to offer training academy / apprenticeships / educational modules relating to alternatively fuelled vehicles
 - Work together to develop hydrogen supply chains so that the technology can be deployed and rolled out on a larger scale
- 4.9 Climate change adaptation and resilience is also featured within the response plan. Recent extreme weather events highlight that across the UK we must be adequately prepared for the impacts of climate change. We must explore what measures we can take to improve drainage; make better use of land and the natural capital assets we have that can assist with flood mitigation.
- 4.10 The second section of the plan outlines how the Council will continue to work with partners to collectively address the climate emergency. Across the borough the Council will play a facilitation, empowering, championing and challenging role to encourage and enable others to take the necessary steps to decarbonise their own activities. The plan contains several case studies demonstrating how this enabling role is currently in use.

- 4.11 The plan once approved will be used as the catalyst to generate wider support and action. There will be considerable engagement undertaken with residents, businesses and other stakeholders to develop a longer-term action plan. This will come back to cabinet in the next 12 months. It will comprise a costed set of activities and interventions that are both specific and measurable to promote accountability and so that we can be measured on performance. A key aspect of this will be how St Helens can be the home and base for green jobs and new green skills for generations to come.
- 4.12 At the heart of our plan and central to all climate related activity is our young people. We must create opportunities for young people to be heard and for those in positions of power to be able to listen to their views. Our plan sets out ways in which the youth of St Helens can meaningfully influence what happens within our borough both now and in the future.

5. Community Impact Assessment

- 5.1 A community impact assessment will be completed during the development of the Climate Action Plan.

6. Consideration of Alternatives

- 6.1 The scale of change needed to tackle climate change means that we must progress with all the measures set out in the response plan.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The St Helens Borough Climate Response Plan represents an early but key part of our roadmap to net zero. The actions and commitments contained in the plan will contribute to the overall net elimination of emissions by 2040. They represent early action and delivery. The scale of change required is overwhelming, but the small steps contained in the plan will provide the catalyst for more action and demonstrate that as a Council we remain firmly focused on the achievement of our net zero targets.

8. Implications

8.1 Legal Implications

- 8.1.1 There are no immediate legal implications in respect of our climate change response plan. The purchase of the new fleet will follow and comply with all relevant procurement regulations to ensure best value is secured.

8.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.2.1 Social Value

Extensive social and added value will be secured through the procurement of the UK's first Hydrogen RCV vehicle. As part of the project to acquire the vehicle a bespoke support, training and development package will be provided. This will enable Council employed mechanics to be trained in a new and emerging technology. This will future proof our service and enables us to share knowledge and learning with businesses across the borough. The supplier of the vehicle will also work with local schools and colleges to provide training and education around emerging Hydrogen technology. These opportunities will be extended to the St Helens

Chamber of Commerce, St Helens College and other tertiary education facilities so that local supply chains can get a head start in the transition to decarbonising transport.

8.2.2 Sustainability and Environment

The climate response plan is the single most notable document that will demonstrate how the Council will reduce its carbon emissions. The plan at Appendix 1 provides much more detail on this

8.2.3 Health and Wellbeing

No immediate Equality and Human Rights issues, community impact assessments will be completed during the development of Climate Action Plan.

8.2.4 Equality and Human Rights

No immediate Equality and Human Rights issues, community impact assessments will be completed during the development of Climate Action Plan.

8.3 Customers and Resident

No immediate Customers and Residents related issues community impact assessments will be completed during the development of Climate Action Plan.

8.4 Asset and Property

8.4.1 The climate response plan and the longer-term climate strategy will mean that all the Council's and Borough Assets will need to consider their impact and carbon emissions. Reducing the carbon output of all the Borough's assets will be a key piece of evidence in future property plans, both building new and retrofitting our existing stock. The report outlines investment into the Council's vehicle fleet a significant asset of the Borough.

8.5 Staffing and Human Resource

8.5.1 There are no additional staff resource implications from the proposals within the plan however it is clear that achieving carbon neutrality must be at the forefront of all services and therefore carbon literacy skills will be required in the workforce and for our Elected Members if we truly want to grasp all possible opportunities and assess their impact and value to our climate change agenda. Carbon literacy will therefore be offered as part of the Councils training and developing plan.

8.6 Risks

8.6.1 The primary risks associated with this report is the non-delivery of actions. This will result in the Council failing to deliver on its net zero ambitions. Other risks relate to the failure to secure the required level of funding or resources

8.7 Finance

8.7.1 It is envisaged that additional capital and revenue budget will be required in order to deliver the detailed, costed action plan that is referred to in the main body of the report. This will be developed and presented to cabinet in the next 6-12 months. At this stage cabinet are asked to endorse in principle the need to allocate additional funding to ensure the delivery of the emerging action plan and note that where possible this will supplement existing service budgets. External funding will also be sought wherever possible.

8.7.2 The replacement of the 10-refuse collection vehicles, including the purchase of the Hydrogen vehicle will cost up to a maximum of £2.8m. Existing vehicle replacement budgets will be the predominant source of funding. We are also exploring external funding options to support the purchase of the Hydrogen vehicle. If external funding is not secured, then the additional costs would be met from a combination of the 2022/23 Climate Fund and the Waste Management Fund (the latter is included in the Council's capital programme). The Climate Fund was approved in principle as part of the strategic capital investment schemes in the MTFs at Cabinet on 24 February 2021.

8.8 Policy Framework Implications

8.8.1 The climate response Plan will play a key role in helping to deliver the #StHelensTogether Borough Strategy.

9. **Background papers**

9.1 Cabinet - Wednesday, 24th March 2021 4.00 pm Establishment of a Climate Commission_

<http://moderngov.sthelens.gov.uk/documents/s112762/St%20Helens%20Climate%20Change%20Commission.pdf>

10. **Appendices**

10.1. Appendix 1: St Helens Climate Response Plan