

Thursday, 30 June 2022

Report of the Leader of the Council

Staffordshire Sustainability Board - Vision 2022-2023

Not Exempt

Purpose

To outline the recent work undertaken by the Staffordshire Sustainability Board and to endorse the Vision and Base Pledge.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. To endorse the Vision and Base Pledge.

Executive Summary

The Staffordshire Leaders Board has committed to work collaboratively across Staffordshire to successfully achieve net carbon zero in line with each local authority's climate change declarations. The purpose of working collaboratively is in recognition that across Staffordshire the influence of individual local authorities will be limited, however jointly, with other Councils and organisations across the public and private sectors, notable impacts will be achievable.

A Staffordshire Sustainability Board (SSB) will take the lead on coordinating activity that will enable, influence and facilitate economic sectors across Staffordshire to start the journey to Net Zero. The Board meets in order to gather together the Elected Members (Sustainability / Climate change portfolio) from the councils in Staffordshire to allow discussion on the relevant environmental sustainability issues, debate matters affecting multiple authorities and decide outcomes and objectives for collective projects. Climate change adaptation and sustainable climate concerns are already on the longer-term agenda for discussion. Collectively, the SSB reports to the Leaders Board and is not a decision-making group.

The SSB will, on behalf of each of the local authorities in the partnership:

- Encourage and support partnership working between the local authorities on environmental sustainability collaborative projects,
- Develop and recommend a Staffordshire Environmental Sustainability Strategy (SESS) for Staffordshire for adoption by of the local authorities,
- Oversee the implementation of the SESS, monitoring delivery against agreed targets and milestones,
- Encourage and support partnership working outside the local area, with other local authorities, government agencies, community groups and companies

where appropriate, both in the local region and elsewhere in the UK accordingly,

- Share best practice in environmental sustainability,
- Source solutions to joint concerns on climate change, such as developing public education on behaviour change,
- Ensure that Staffordshire is represented both regionally and nationally on relevant issues and that opportunities to influence the regional and national agenda are pursued effectively,
- Through a collective bidding approach, ensure opportunities are explored to secure external funding, and agree arrangements for the management and distribution of external monies secured.

The Staffordshire Sustainability Senior Officers Group (SSSOG) was formed by the Leaders Board to support and advise the member-led SSB. It comprises representatives from all authorities in Staffordshire.

At the Board meeting on the 7 March 2022 the Vision and Base Pledge for the Board were agreed, see Appendix 1.

The Vision seeks to capture the role of the SSB and the purpose of the Board for 2022-23.

The initial pledge, or commitments, from each authority is also set out in Appendix 1 and is being taken through the relevant governance processes within each authority for endorsement. The pledge seeks to ensure that Staffordshire local authorities are focusing on a key set of priorities, without making those commitments too onerous given that we are all on different paths and with different timescales, to achieving Net Zero.

Options Considered

N/A

Resource Implications

There is an agreement that the member authorities will fund part (£5,000 per annum) of the salary for a supporting officer to the SSSOG and the SSB. This arrangement is the same principle as the supporting officer to the Joint Waste officers' group and Board.

This £5,000 will initially be funded via the balance of £105,000 held in the Climate Change reserve (PM1579) in 22/23 and will be subject to a policy change in the 2023/24 budget process.

The initial pledge, or commitments, from each authority will also be funded from the reserve or will be subject to further funding requests through the budget process as any additional funding requirements are quantified.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

It is becoming increasingly likely, as part of the Government's wider 'Carbon Agenda' that individual Councils will be required (for national monitoring purposes) to report progress on achieving their carbon reduction targets. There may be penalties for Councils who fail to do so.

Equalities Implications

N/A

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

The SSB and corresponding officer group are coordinating activities across Staffordshire to meet Net Zero. This is an important workstream that will compliment the activities of the Borough Council in reaching Net Zero against the climate emergency declaration.

Background Information

On the 19th November 2019, Tamworth Borough Council declared a 'Climate Emergency' and resolved to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2050 with aspiration to achieve 2030 should the Council be financially able to do so.

The decision for Tamworth Borough Council to declare a "Climate Emergency" was based on the 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C', published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018. This identified the catastrophic consequences that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures would cause in comparison with a 1.5°C rise in temperature.

Net-zero is about balancing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted against the amount of emissions that are either offset or sequestered (repossessed).

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

- Climate Change Declaration Update – Cabinet: 15 February 2021.

Appendices

- Vision and Base Pledge

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