

# North Yorkshire Council

## Executive

18 July 2023

### North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy for Adoption

#### Report of the Corporate Director Environment

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To approve the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy for adoption and consider the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Action Pledge for signature.

#### **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Climate Change Strategy preparation process is coming to a close after 12 months of engagement and consultation. Approval is now sought for the final version of the Strategy.
- 2.2 North Yorkshire Council has been invited to sign up to the Climate Action Pledge.

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 NYCC declared a climate emergency in July 2022 and pledged to play a full part in tackling climate change. Officers were requested to prepare a Climate Change Strategy for the new Council. The North Yorkshire Council (NYC) Climate Change Strategy draft for public consultation was approved by Executive 17 January 2023.
- 3.2 The York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has led the development of York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative, aiming to develop a co-owned plan about how the region as a whole (businesses, communities and public sector) can achieve net zero by 2034 and carbon negative by 2040. The 'Routemap' was endorsed by Executive on 17 January 2023.
- 3.3 The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission brings together public, private and third sector actors to support, guide and track the delivery of ambitious climate actions across the region. The establishment of the Commission has been supported by the Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Board.

#### **4.0 North Yorkshire Council Climate Strategy 2023 – 2030**

- 4.1 The consultation on the draft Strategy has received over 1700 responses over an eight-week period. A report outlining the response was considered by Transport Environment Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny on 25 May 2023. In addition, the 'Under 25s survey on climate change' feedback has been analysed and these are referenced as background papers.
- 4.2 Several amendments have been made to the draft Strategy in response to the consultation and to ensure activities undertaken since the January 2023 draft are incorporated:
- i. Re arrangement of the objectives to differentiate between the three key themes and the NYC operational carbon reduction section.

- ii. Updating the Strategy with significant NYC activities since the January draft. This includes various multimillion successful project funding bids and emerging Food, Economic Development and Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Local Transport Plan and, internally, the 'transformation programme' which features climate change throughout its reviews.
- iii. The communication and engagement section has been enhanced to ensure that we bring our communities with us and share best practice, improve collaborative opportunities and reduce duplication. This particularly relates to 'adaptation' theme which is at an immature stage of planning and practice both within the public sector and in the general public understanding. It is also important to highlight the current activities which we are already taking and confidence that we are continuing to deliver the existing 8 climate action plans already agreed by the previous authorities.
- iv. Clarity on governance and responsibility for delivery, risk and performance has been improved.
- v. Emphasis that there will be an Action Plan following which will contain milestones and performance targets. This will be predominantly drawn from Directorate and Service Climate Action Plans which are being created to embed climate action across all services. It is not anticipated that this will be a 'costed' action plan, but officer resource and responsibilities will be identified and brought forward through the normal governance routes on a business case basis.
- vi. Clearly indicate the Local Plan as a driver for climate responsible actions.
- vii. Increased narrative response on the role of the Local Transport Plan to develop public transport and the role of both NYC and operators and the alternative travel options.

And, notwithstanding the fact that these are not core Council activities,

- viii. Focus on what the Council can do to support reduction in agricultural emissions.
- ix. Support community action, particularly community energy development. This is currently an immature sector but with huge potential for both climate change and cost of living responses.
- x. Improved response of the Council to the barrier of electrical grid capacity.

- 4.3 The proposed final Strategy is in Appendix A. In summary the Strategy outlines North Yorkshire Council's high-level response to the Climate Emergency. It builds on the plans and strategies developed by the eight predecessor local authorities and outlines where the Council can best deploy its resources to make its contribution in relation to its own operational activity and also support residents, businesses and visitors in the county to take climate responsible actions. It indicates what the Council's role is in supporting wider partners to implement the 'York and North Yorkshire Routemap to carbon negative'.
- 4.4 The Strategy activities are based on three themes; Mitigation (decreasing greenhouse gas emissions), adaptation (preparing for the climate to change) and supporting nature (helping the natural world, on which we depend, to thrive).
- 4.5 The Council will, continuing the policies adopted by the predecessor local authorities, commit to achieve net zero in its own operational activity by 2030.
- 4.6 In order to implement the Strategy a key principle is that climate change mitigation, adaptation and supporting nature must be embedded within every service design and delivery and each take responsibility for setting decarbonisation targets and actions. Every service that the Council delivers will need to transform to a greater or lesser extent to reduce carbon emissions, adapt to the changing climate and support nature both operationally and to support and enable residents, businesses and visitors in the county to take climate responsible actions.

- 4.7 The Strategy outlines how the governance and performance management responsibilities will be shared between Executive, Scrutiny Committee and Officer 'Beyond Carbon' group.
- 4.8 Following adoption of the Strategy, it will be designed up for the NYC website and library hard copies and launched. An Action Plan will be developed setting out how the Council will deploy its resources to deliver the Strategy.

## **5.0 Yorkshire and Humber Climate Action Pledge**

- 5.1 As part of their action plan, the Commission request partners to 'sign up' to their ambitions through signing the 'Climate Action Pledge' which is a commitment to act on climate and nature <https://yorksandhumberclimate.org.uk/yorkshire-humber-climate-action-pledge>. In doing this, the signing organisation commits to taking and reporting on actions that:
- Help to protect the organisation or business from climate impacts
  - Puts the organisation on the road towards net zero
  - Boosts nature, enhancing our region's fantastic natural assets
  - Promotes taking climate action in a fair way that involves everyone.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES**

- 6.1 Pre-draft Strategy engagement was undertaken with a range of North Yorkshire community groups in summer / autumn period 2023 and was also based on extensive consultation with public, private and voluntary sector partners carried out in 2022 by the LEP in the development of the Routemap.
- 6.2 Draft Strategy public consultation was undertaken through the Let's Talk Climate platform and through the more traditional routes of formal written responses on the NYCC / NYC website and via the library service for hard copy responses. In addition, a survey co designed by Harrogate Youth Council for the under 25 age group was utilised. The summary results of the feedback is outlined in 4.1 above.
- 6.3 TEEEO&SC requested further review of the Strategy prior to consideration by Executive and have met informally to provide additional comments. These are in Appendix D.

## **7.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 7.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to play its part in tackling the causes and impacts of climate change.
- 7.2 The Strategy delivers the following specific Council Plan ambitions:
- Place and Environment:
    - A clean, environmentally sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit
    - A well connected and planned place with good transport links and digital connectivity
    - Communities are supported and work together to improve their local area
    - Good quality, affordable and sustainable housing that meets the needs of our communities
  - Economy
    - Economically sustainable growth that enables people and places to prosper
    - Culture, heritage, arts and sustainable tourism all play their part in the economic growth of the county
  - Health and Wellbeing
    - People are supported to have a good quality of life and enjoy active and healthy lifestyles
    - Reduced variations in health through tackling the root causes of inequality

- People
  - In times of hardship, support is provided to those that need it most
- Organisation
  - A carbon neutral council

## **8.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

8.1 The Strategy has been through various iterations at pre- draft, draft and final version stages. Themes, ambitions and activities have been refined throughout this process.

## **9.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS**

9.1 The Climate Change Strategy will have impact on a wide range of services as the three themes and ambition to be operationally net zero by 2030 will be embedded into each Directorate to become 'business as usual' activity.

## **10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The Strategy is a high level document and will lead to the development of a detailed Action Plan which will have financial implications for NYC. The financial implications of each element of the action plan will need to be considered in detail as it is developed, and this consideration will need to take into account the Council's many statutory and critical responsibilities and the Council's financial position. Each action will need approval in line with the Council's financial procedure rules, to progress, if there are financial implications of doing so.

10.2 A budget of £1 million was made available as a pump priming fund for climate change actions (disbursed through the Beyond Carbon Board) of which £540,000 remains uncommitted.

10.3 There are no direct financial implications for NYC of signing up to the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission's Climate Action Pledge.

## **11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are now a number of Acts which seek to deal with the implications of Climate Change. These include the Climate Change Act 2008 which sets out a range of measures to deal with climate change including emission reduction targets which the UK must comply with and carbon budgeting and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 19 (1A) which requires local planning authorities to have policies in their Local Plans securing that development and land use contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. In addition, the Environment Act 2021 also contains further targets to protect the environment and to tackle the impacts of climate change. Regard has been given to all relevant legislation when preparing the strategy.

## **12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The Strategy has been developed to reach as many people as possible and seeks to engage all sectors of society through the use of plain English, utilising online survey tools that met accessibility standards and 'in person' support to understand the text and respond accordingly provided through the library service. Throughout the Strategy, the opportunities to support an equal transition to a low carbon economy are highlighted, including the development of community owned assets and upskilling in low carbon technologies. An Equalities Impact Assessment screening assessment (Appendix 2) indicates a full EIA is not required.

### **13.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The report outlines the climate change interventions that are required to secure our local and global future and meet locally derived ambitions and nationally required targets. The issues identified in the report have direct relevance to the activities we take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to prepare for climate change and to support nature to thrive. A full Climate Change Impact Assessment is in Appendix 3.

### **14.0 CONCLUSIONS**

14.1 The Climate Change Strategy has taken 12 months for research and data collection, public engagement and final drafting to ensure that the contents are appropriate and realistic for North Yorkshire Council. The key feedback from the consultation was that NYC should take as many climate responsible actions as fast as possible to respond to the climate emergency. The Strategy is the first step to achieving this.

### **15.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

15.1 It is proposed that North Yorkshire Council adopts the Climate Change Strategy, taking account of the Council's broader responsibilities and the Council's financial position, setting out how the Council's services will support and enable residents, businesses and visitors to take climate responsible actions, become net zero as an organisation and contribute towards the delivery of York and North Yorkshire's Routemap to Carbon Negative.

15.2 It is proposed that NYC becomes a signatory to the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission's Climate Action Pledge to demonstrate support for working in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sector organisations at the Yorkshire and Humber regional scale.

### **16.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

16.1 Members of the Executive are recommended to:

- i) Approve the North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy be adopted;
- ii) Agree that North Yorkshire Council signs up to the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission's Climate Action Pledge.

Karl Battersby  
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10 July 2023

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Presenter of Report – Jos Holmes, Climate Change Policy Officer, Strategy and Performance.

#### **APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – North Yorkshire Council Climate Change Strategy and supporting documents  
Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment screening  
Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment  
Appendix D – TEEEO&SC Informal meeting comments

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Climate Emergency: [Executive held on 5 July 2022, North Yorkshire County Council](#)

Transport, Economy, Environment and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 25 May 2023, North Yorkshire Council.

Under 25 Young People's climate change survey report.

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions