

North Yorkshire County Council

Executive

13 July 2021

Carbon Reduction Plan

Report of the Chief Executive

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- i. Present the draft Carbon Reduction Plan for Executive Members' consideration
- ii. Ask Executive Members to propose to the Chief Executive Officer that he approve the draft Carbon Reduction Plan, using his emergency delegated powers

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Under his delegated decision making powers in the Officers' Delegation Scheme in the Council's Constitution, the Chief Executive Officer has power, in cases of emergency, to take any decision which could be taken by the Council, the Executive or a committee. Following on from the expiry of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, which allowed for committee meetings to be held remotely, the County Council resolved at its meeting on 5 May 2021 that, for the present time, in light of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic circumstances, remote live-broadcast committee meetings should continue (as informal meetings of the Committee Members), with any formal decisions required being taken by the Chief Executive Officer under his emergency decision making powers and after consultation with other Officers and Members as appropriate and after taking into account any views of the relevant Committee Members. This approach will be reviewed by full Council at its July meeting.
- 2.2 On 24 July 2019 North Yorkshire County Council passed a motion which committed to producing a carbon reduction plan to meet aspirations to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as near to that date as possible.
- 2.3 Progress on development of the plan was slowed by the Covid response but work has now been undertaken on understanding our carbon footprint, developing a pathway tool and identifying realistic potential options to significantly reduce our footprint. These have all informed the content of the draft plan. We have also established a measure of cost-effectiveness (£ per ktCO₂e removed) to enable business cases to be assessed.
- 2.4 A Beyond Carbon programme within the Council's change management governance structure has been established to oversee the main strands of the plan and a one-off £1m fund for pump-priming and development of business cases has been committed in the Council's 2021-22 budget.
- 2.5 Other work has included developing and incorporating a climate change impact assessment tool into the council's decision making process, so that carbon emissions and other environmental considerations are taken into account when decisions are made.

3.0 Draft Carbon Reduction Plan

- 3.1 The draft carbon reduction plan sets out the Council's aspirations in relation to carbon reduction in the context of national and regional commitments.
- 3.2 It acknowledges that our carbon footprint consists of:
Scope 1 emissions – heating and ventilation of our corporate buildings and fleet vehicles. (This does not include school buildings).
Scope 2 emissions – electricity use for power and lighting (including street lighting)
Scope 3 emissions – including business travel using staff's own vehicles, procurement of goods and services, schools, companies owned by the County Council, waste and water use.
- 3.3 The plan concentrates on the emissions which we have direct control over and direct ways of measuring emissions from i.e. Scope 1 emissions, Scope 2 emissions and some Scope 3 emissions (water use and business travel). It provides details of achievements so far and future actions over the next three years.
- 3.4 is proposed in the future that the plan be integrated with the Council Plan and refreshed annually as a consequence.
- 3.5 The plan also details other areas of work to reduce wider carbon emissions and negative impacts on the environment.
- 3.6 The draft carbon reduction plan is attached at appendix 1.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There will need to be considerable financial investment to achieve the Council's aspiration to be carbon neutral. Some of this investment, for example in improvements to thermal insulation and heating systems, will save money in the longer term and a number of funding streams are available to support some elements of the required action e.g. tree planting, decarbonisation of heating of public sector buildings.
- 4.2 However, we and other local authorities will not be able to tackle every aspect of carbon reduction nor achieve net carbon neutrality without government support and action through legislation and fiscal measures.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The County Council will need to contribute to national legal targets for carbon emissions reduction.
- 5.2 The government is already working towards its commitment to reduce emissions in 2030 by at least 68% compared to 1990 levels. In addition, the Prime Minister recently agreed to legislate a new target to reduce national emissions by 78% by 2035 (compared to 1990 levels), including emissions from international shipping and aviation, following the independent Climate Change Committee's advice on the Sixth Carbon Budget.
- 5.2 The new target will become enshrined in law by the end of June 2021.

6.0 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed and is included at appendix 2.

6.2 Overall the plan's aim to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and its impact on climate change is positive for everyone in the county, including those with protected characteristics. The plan is an overarching document and specific equality impact assessments will be carried out on decisions made in relation to actions in each area.

7.0 Environmental Impacts/Benefits

7.1 A climate change impact assessment has been completed and is included at appendix 3.

7.2 The carbon reduction plan, by definition, aims to reduce the carbon footprint of the County Council and help it achieve its aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2030 or as near to that date as possible. From April 2022 the plan will be integrated into our Council Plan and reviewed annually. Progress will be regularly monitored as part of our corporate performance management framework including quarterly performance reports to our Management Board and Executive.

8.0 Recommendation

That, subject to any comments Executive Members may have, the draft Carbon Reduction Plan at Appendix 1 be proposed to the Chief Executive Officer for his consideration and approval, using his emergency delegated powers.

Richard Flinton

Chief Executive
County Hall
Northallerton
28 June 2021

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Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft carbon reduction plan
Appendix 2: Equality impact assessment
Appendix 3: Climate change impact assessment