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## **Meeting of the Climate Change Select Committee – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

### **Report of the Acting Service Director – Neighbourhood Delivery**

### **Dudley Council Climate Action Plan**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To approve the Dudley Council Climate Action Plan, Phase 1 (2024-2027), as part of the council's response to the climate emergency.

#### **Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the committee:
  - Approves Dudley Council's Climate Action Plan, Phase 1 (2024-2027) set out in Appendix 1 outlining how the Council will work to reduce carbon emissions from the council's operations and activities and influence carbon reduction boroughwide.
  - Recognises that the rapidly changing international / national / regional / local context will require an annual update of the Action Plan to review the data and evidence, monitor progress and insert new actions to further reduce the council's carbon footprint towards achieving its ambition to reach carbon net zero by 2030.

### **3. Background**

#### **3.1 Climate Change Science**

Human activity has already caused irreversible climate change and its impacts are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have increased since pre-industrial times. The past decade has seen record breaking storms, forest fires, droughts, heat waves and floods around the world.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a United Nations body, founded in 1988, which evaluates climate change science. In 2018, an IPCC special report detailed the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and stated that in order to remain within a 1.5°C temperature increase, national governments would have to drastically cut emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030. This is to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change, such as widespread drought, food scarcity, heat related deaths and significant biodiversity loss.

### **3.2 Climate Emergency**

The Climate Emergency movement was established in response to the IPCC report. To date, over 300 Local Authorities in the UK have declared a Climate Emergency. Most of these councils have committed to becoming carbon net zero for their operations by 2030 in recognition of the need to limit global temperatures to 1.5°C or below, however by comparison, the UK government's net zero target date is 2050.

### **3.3 Climate Emergency Motion**

Dudley Council recognises that climate change is having a significant impact on the environment world-wide, and a direct impact on our local places, communities and wildlife. The climate is already changing with warmer, wetter winters, and hotter, drier summers becoming the norm.

The incidence and severity of extreme weather events is increasing. In the past decade, Dudley has experienced a wide range of extreme weather, including surface water flooding, heatwaves, heavy snow and storms which have impacted the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of residents.

In response, the Council recognises that it has a leadership role to play by:

- Setting a positive example by addressing the climate impact of our own operations and services.
- Providing information and advice to the public and encouraging our staff to take action.
- Engaging with partners, residents, businesses and community stakeholders to tackle climate change across the Borough.

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2020. The declaration included the following specific commitments relating to climate change:

- Establish a Council-wide climate change group to develop and monitor the delivery of a carbon reduction plan for the council.

- Encourage partners to declare a Climate Emergency and take steps to achieve a net-zero carbon footprint.
- Explore opportunities for investment in green businesses and support green business growth.

Following the declaration, the Council committed to become a carbon net zero council by 2030 and a net zero borough by 2041.

### 3.4 Net Zero Council

#### What we are already doing

Over the past year, the Council has made progress in reducing carbon emissions from its operations and activities, including from the initiatives in the table below:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Potential Carbon Saving (Low / Medium / High / Enabling)</b>
100% green energy purchased for the council estate	High
8 travel plans agreed with developers/existing employers/educational establishments	Enabling
7 new or upgraded pedestrian/cycle phases	Enabling
15 employees have signed up to the staff cycle scheme	Low
5 new puffins/toucans/parallel crossings for pedestrians/cyclists	Enabling
2 new traffic signal junctions include LED lamps and extra low voltage power supply	Enabling
0.96km of new cycle footpaths	Enabling
50 EV charging points to be installed across the borough by April 2024	Enabling

23 fossil fuel-based machinery replaced with electric machinery, such as leaf blowers and hedge cutters	Low
5 electric quad bikes purchased for street scene operations in lieu of petrol quad bikes	Medium
100 public recycling waste bins	Medium
Trialling electric mechanical sweepers	Low
Undertaking a programme to change 30,000 streetlights to LED	High
More than 60 per cent of Dudley borough schools have a 20mph scheme in their locality with many others having traffic calming measures in place	Enabling
416 solar panels installed on the roof of Duncan Edwards Leisure Centre, saving 23 tonnes of CO2 a year	Medium
First in the region to secure funding on a Net Zero Neighbourhoods pilot that will see 300 homes be sustainably retrofitted including loft, cavity and solid wall insulation, solar PV schemes, electric vehicle street charging points, community food growing initiatives and nature-based solutions such as green roofs.	Enabling

### **3.5 Carbon Reduction Baseline**

To reach the 2030 net zero target, the Council will have to go further and reduce its emissions by a further 13,209.85 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> which is the amount of carbon generated from our buildings and activities in our baseline year, April 2022 - March 2023.

In order to establish the Council's baseline, emissions have been calculated from each area of council activities, including buildings where we can control usage (this excludes schools and the property investment portfolio) in accordance with the most widely used carbon accounting tool, known as the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol.

There are different scopes referred to in the GHG Protocol which assist in defining the sources of greenhouse gas emissions:

- Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources.
- Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling consumed by the organisation.
- Scope 3 includes all other indirect emissions, for example, those arising from contracted services. There is currently no standard methodology for measuring Scope 3 emissions, hence the Council's net zero target relates to Scopes 1 & 2 only.

### **3.6 Dudley Council Climate Action Plan**

The Dudley Council Climate Action Plan (Appendix 1) sets out actions to be delivered over the next three years. It is published in line with the Council declaration on the climate emergency and demonstrates a commitment to take action on climate change - but it is not set in stone. The actions are based on a range of assumptions and current knowledge, but recognises the role that new technology, changing public attitudes, funding and government policy will have on the plan. It is a living document and will be formally reviewed and updated annually.

The Action Plan is divided into 6 themes as follows:

- Theme 1: Community and Business
- Theme 2: Transport and Active Travel
- Theme 3: Energy
- Theme 4: Waste and Fleet
- Theme 5: Land Use and Biodiversity

- Theme 6: Enabling Actions (these actions support delivery of individual actions, such as communications, fundraising and partnership working)

### **3.7 Biodiversity & Carbon Offsetting**

Biodiversity has been severely impacted by the rise in average global temperatures. Species distributions are changing, along with the timing of migration, breeding and flowering. The Council recognises the need to address the Biodiversity Crisis alongside the Climate Emergency.

Nature-based solutions can play a key role in mitigating against, and adapting to, the impact of a changing climate. Natural solutions and environmentally sustainable land management practices can be used to maximise the ability of wildlife habitats to absorb carbon from the atmosphere through natural processes, known as carbon sequestration.

The Dudley Climate Action Plan states that, only after seeking to reduce carbon emissions to as close to zero as possible, will the Council offset its residual carbon budget through local carbon sequestration projects, such as habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement schemes on nature reserves and local wildlife sites.

As a minimum we are committing to:

- (i) Maintain and undertake wildlife habitat restoration on Dudley's Nature Reserves.
- (ii) Create opportunities on other green spaces for creation and enhancement of priority habitats, including trees and woodlands, grassland and wetlands.

### **3.8 Net Zero Borough**

The Council is leading by example in reducing its own carbon emissions, and by using its planning and regulatory powers to shape and influence climate action in its local area. However, the Council recognises the need to work with partners and stakeholders to tackle climate change across the Borough as a whole. The Council will therefore be facilitating the establishment of a borough-wide climate partnership over the next 6-12 months, where the council will invite local organisations, businesses and community groups to come together to explore and implement ways and means for the borough to become net zero by 2041.

### **3.9 Engagement and Communications**

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023, the Council launched its climate change webpage – Dudley Climate Action – providing information on the climate emergency declaration and the Council’s vision for climate change.

The webpage will continue to evolve to include information on:

- Climate action ideas for community groups and businesses
- Funding and support available for climate action
- Sharing best practice, case studies and toolkits

#### **Finance**

4. The action plan is an amalgamation of existing and planned council projects and initiatives funded across key directorates. As such, there is no additional budget required to deliver the plan. Consideration has been given to current cost control processes and extensive consultation carried out with officers to check that actions included have the necessary budgets allocated.

#### **Law**

5. There are no legal implications arising from the development of the climate action plan.

#### **Risk Management**

6. Implementation of the climate action plan will help mitigate the climate change risks on the council’s strategic risk register.

#### **Equality Impact**

7. No equality impacts have been identified. A public consultation exercise, including involvement of children and young people, will be undertaken as part of the development of the borough-wide climate action plan.

#### **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

8. Advice and input has been provided by HR and Organisational Development to develop the actions in the plan relating to carbon literacy training and internal communications/behaviour change campaigns for council staff.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

9. There are no commercial or procurement impacts.

## **Environment/Climate Change**

10. This decision will support the Council in delivering a carbon reduction plan for the authority, and to define existing council carbon emissions under Scopes 1 and 2 of the greenhouse gas protocol, in order to set a carbon budget to reach net zero by 2030 for council operations and activities.

## **Council Priorities and Projects**

### 11. Forging a Future for All

Our climate commitment is creating a sustainable borough on its way to net zero carbon emissions, improved air quality, reduced fuel poverty and outstanding waste and recycling services.

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

12. The recommendations from this plan will have a direct and positive impact on air quality, transport and travel emissions, housing energy efficiency, energy security and affordability/cost of living, provision of green skills and jobs and biodiversity.



**Nick McGurk**  
**Acting Service Director of Neighbourhood Delivery**

Report Author: Fiona Mahon  
Head of Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change  
[fiona.mahon@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.mahon@dudley.gov.uk)

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Dudley Climate Action Plan Phase 1 (2024 – 2027)



## List of Background Documents

Documents available publicly:

IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty* [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 3-24, doi:[10.1017/9781009157940.001](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157940.001).

[https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/#:~:text=This%20report%20focuses%20on%20%27climate,%2Doffs%20\(high%20confidence\).](https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/#:~:text=This%20report%20focuses%20on%20%27climate,%2Doffs%20(high%20confidence).)