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**Meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Select Committee – 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2024**

**Report of the Director of Environment**

**Environmental Policy**

**Purpose of report**

1. To seek approval of the Environmental Policy for Dudley Council which will inform future policy directions of the Council in relation to the environmental impacts of delivering Council operations.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended:-
  - Cabinet approve the Environmental Policy.
  - That the Head of Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director for Environment, be authorised to amend and/or make additions to the Policy.

**Background**

3. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2020 and set the ambition for the Council to be carbon net zero by 2030, and the borough to be carbon net zero by 2041, 9 years ahead of the Government target of 2050.

In March 2024 the Council adopted its first Climate Action Plan. As part of this plan, the council committed to producing an Environmental Policy. The Policy sets out the Council's overall position in relation to environmental performance. The Environmental Policy recognises that the Council has a responsibility towards the local environment and that global issues, such as climate change, need to be tackled through action at a local as well as regional, national and international level. The Policy sets out the Council's

commitments to environmental performance through its own activities and highlights where it can influence and encourage others to adopt similar environmental standards. The Policy covers air quality, local environmental impacts, natural and built environment, water, energy, waste management, sustainability, and social value and sustainable technologies.

All Local Authorities have an impact on the environment through their service delivery and internal functions. Having an Environmental Policy will help to manage these environmental impacts and assist the Council in delivering the council vision for Dudley.

Forging A Future for All 2030 is the Council's vision for the Borough and has seven themes, one of these is the Environment. The ambition in the vision is that the Policy will help to deliver a borough that is:

*An affordable and attractive place to live, with a green network of high quality parks, waterways and nature reserves that are valued by local people and visitors.*

The benefits associated with adopting the Environmental Policy include assuring customers of a continued commitment to demonstrate environmental management, maintaining good community relations, enhancing image, improving cost control, reducing incidents that result in liability, conserving raw materials and energy.

Successful delivery of this policy will help to build the Council's reputation as an authority which takes environmental issues and climate change seriously.

The policy will be made publicly available and communicated to all staff. It will be posted on the Council website and intranet. It will also be provided to bidders as part of the tender process and any contractors on site.

#### 4. Consultation

The Environmental Policy has undergone consultation with officers within the Climate and Sustainability Board. All comments have been used to inform the final Policy.

## **Finance**

5. The costs of implementing the Environmental Policy in respect of operations and activities undertaken by the Council are met from within the existing budgets of individual service areas. The Council's Climate Policy Manager provides the staffing resource to manage the Environmental Policy.

## **Law**

6. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2020 and set the ambition for the Council to be carbon net zero by 2030, and the borough to be carbon net zero by 2041, 9 years ahead of the Government target of 2050.

## **Risk Management**

7. Failure to develop the approve the Policy would present a reputational risk to the Council.

## **Equality Impact**

8. In order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and the Dudley Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025, for any activity undertaken under the action plan that has an impact on people, an Equality Impact Assessment shall be undertaken, to ensure there has been due regard of impact on differing groups.

Initial work with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager has highlighted how environmental impacts have a varying impact on those falling into different categories and protected groups, such as the disparities caused by health status, disability status, age, pregnancy/maternity, race, voluntary and community sectors; alongside the impact on public cohesion.

Notwithstanding, this, in our changing borough, there is also the socioeconomic impact that should be considered, in terms of poverty and financial inclusion.

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

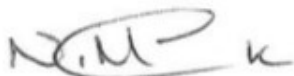
9. Delivery of the Council's Environmental Policy is based on current staffing resources and departmental headcount, and therefore this proposal has no direct HR impacts.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

10. The policy will help inform council officers considering and writing specifications leading to better environmental outcomes in contracts awarded.

## **Council Plan**

11. The endorsement of this policy will have a direct and positive impact on key Council priorities including:
  - Financial sustainability, efficiency and providing best value
  - Governance and control
  - Leadership and culture
  - Delivering for our customers, residents and communities
  - Supporting businesses and the local economy



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## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Environmental Policy