



Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford

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Dear Members

Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Thursday 5 September** at **6.30pm** in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "I. Curran".

Head of Law and Governance

CABINET - 5 SEPTEMBER 2024

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of 8 August 2024 as circulated and published on 9 August 2024
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Councillors' Question Time (if any)
- 4 Proposals of the Cabinet Members (as follows):-

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- (a) **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO**
- (i) Staffordshire's Climate Emergency Shared Statement on Planning Policy Commitments 3 - 13

Membership

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| A T A Godfrey | - Leader |
| R Kenney | - Deputy Leader (Town Centres Regeneration Portfolio) |
| R P Cooke | - Resources Portfolio |
| I D Fordham | - Environment Portfolio |
| J Hood | - Community Portfolio |
| G P K Pardesi | - Leisure Portfolio |
| A N Pearce | - Climate Action and Nature Recovery Portfolio |
| A F Reid | - Economic Development and Planning Portfolio |

Agenda Item 4(a)(i)

Staffordshire's Climate Emergency Shared Statement on Planning Policy Commitments

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	5 September 2024
Report of:	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Portfolio:	Economic Development and Planning

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek agreement to a shared statement produced jointly by the Local Planning Authorities in Staffordshire (**APPENDIX 1**). The shared statement seeks a commitment to explore the inclusion of proactive policies in emerging local plans to address the declared climate emergency and to undertake additional studies with the aim of improving the evidence base in support of achieving the transition to net zero by 2050.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Stafford Borough Council become a signatory to the Staffordshire planning policy commitments shared statement annexed as **APPENDIX 1** and supports the policy directions and future evidence requirements to support the transition towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050;
- 2.2 That delegated authority is approved for the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Planning to be the signatory on behalf of Stafford Borough Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.3 This shared statement builds upon and seeks to implement measures identified in a study commissioned jointly by the Staffordshire Local Planning Authorities 'Climate Change Adoption and Mitigation Final Report 2020' ('the 2020 study').

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Government has established legally binding targets to reduce carbon emissions which will occur at pace over the lifetime of emerging and future local plans. The aim is to promote a 78% reduction by 2035 with a transition to net zero by 2050. This requirement is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that planning should contribute to 'radical reductions' in greenhouse gas emissions (NPPF Para 152).
- 3.2 The Council has declared a climate change emergency (July 2019) and has also produced and regularly monitors a Climate Change Strategy. Agreement to the commitments in the shared statement will complement the approach which the Council has taken towards addressing climate change and support the transition towards achieving the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. It should be noted that policy commitments will be assessed in terms of viability through the New Local Plan process on new developments in the context of other infrastructure and affordable housing needs.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Objective 2: To improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing resilient communities that promote health and wellbeing.
- 4.2 Objective 3: To tackle Climate Change by implementing our Climate Change and Green Recovery objectives.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 In 2020 a study was jointly commissioned by the Staffordshire local planning authorities 'Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Final Report' ('the 2020 study'). The 2020 study sought to promote a shared approach to addressing climate change and included a number of policy recommendations. These recommendations have formed the basis of the current shared statement and attempt to provide a common county-wide approach within local plan policies to support the transition towards net zero emissions by 2050. The emerging Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020-2040 includes a suite of policies, including a requirement for residential new builds to achieve net zero, that will ensure we are delivering on the shared statement commitments. In 2022 a Stage 1 viability study was carried out on the emerging Plan at Preferred Options stage, including requirements relating to the Future Homes Standard and net zero, with implications for the level of developer contributions that could be secured for other infrastructure and affordable housing.

- 5.2 Whilst acknowledging that planning policies will not achieve net zero in isolation, the planning system does play a crucial role in promoting a reduction in emissions in multiple sectors through support for energy efficient construction and buildings, support for renewables and sustainable transport and promoting carbon sequestration. It is calculated that 68% of current domestic emissions come from sectors heavily linked to planning including buildings, surface transport, manufacturing / construction and grid supply.
- 5.3 In addition to agreeing to the existing policy recommendations, the shared statement commits the local planning authorities to improving the evidence base to enable the monitoring of progress towards achieving the policy recommendations. Improved evidence will also be necessary to enable the future refinement of policies and targets and to identify the extent to which the net zero target can be delivered through the planning system relative to other initiatives outside the scope of planning. This evidence should provide a clear roadmap and measurable targets to achieving net zero in planning by 2050.
- 5.4 The request for Stafford Borough Council to be a formal signatory of the commitment, alongside all other Staffordshire authorities, has been endorsed by the Staffordshire Sustainability Board. Through the Sustainability Board, all local authorities agreed to take this Staffordshire climate change planning policy commitment through their individual authority agreement process.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There is no immediate financial impact of the proposed decision to become a signatory to the climate change shared agreement. Implementing the shared statement will be through adoption of proposed climate change policies in the emerging Local Plan and therefore will not incur any additional cost.

Additional evidence that establishes a roadmap to achieving net zero by 2050 has not been factored into the Local Plan budget to date and the cost of this work still needs to be scoped. It is envisaged that the work is undertaken as a joint commission by Staffordshire authorities.

6.2 Legal

The Climate Change Act 2008 set a legally binding target on the UK to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80%, compared to 1990 levels, by 2050. The 80% target was increased to a 100% target in 2019 (the net zero target).

The New Local Plan has to be prepared in accordance with the relevant Planning Acts and regulations, and be aligned with related national planning policy and guidance. The Plan will need in accordance with the Council's constitution to be formally endorsed by Full Council prior to publication and on adoption.

6.3 Human Resources

The New Local Plan will be delivered by existing staff from within Economic Development and Planning, and the wider organisation, together with support from specialist consultants.

6.4 Risk Management

It is widely recognised that a 'do nothing' approach to climate change is no longer a viable option, with action required collectively at an international, national and local level including the Staffordshire climate change agreement and new Local Plans.

The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states that humankind has 12 years to ensure global warming is limited to a maximum of 1.5°C. Surpassing this threshold would significantly worsen the risks posed to humans and wildlife on a global scale. Climate change can be mitigated for in a variety of ways. The importance of the collective efforts of our population should not be underestimated with efforts to reduce emissions having long-term benefits and may allow us to stop short of the dangerous 'tipping points' that will initiate runaway climate change.

The Council's position as a Local Authority means that it has a duty to establish itself as a key leader when responding to the challenge of mitigating climate change. Therefore, the Council must consider how it can facilitate collective action to enable the use of more environmentally friendly and sustainable practices. Nevertheless it should be noted that there will be a development cost the delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation which will need to be assessed through future Local Plan viability studies, to consider associated implications for other forms of infrastructure provision and affordable housing.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

The agreement is seeking to implement a number of measures previously identified within an existing study as necessary to progress towards achieving the goal of a net zero carbon Staffordshire by 2050. This will be considered through the New Local Plan 2020-2040 in order to provide clear guidance to developers, and also members of the public, through planning policies and proposals in across the Borough. This will enable any resident or business to see the requirements related to future development. There are no direct impacts identified for Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation at this stage.

The New Local Plan will deliver a statutory development plan which is designed to be inclusive to all residents and those interested in planning the future for the Borough.

Throughout the process of preparing the New Local Plan a thorough consultation and engagement process will enable residents and interested parties to be involved in its preparation, including 24/7 access to key documents through the Borough Council's website.

6.6 Health

Working from a consistent evidence base through the Borough Council and with partners, ensures that recommendations made in relation to the Climate Change shared agreement and associated New Local Plan 2020-2040 with policy-specific areas are consistent and complementary to an approach that supports equality in both service provision and health outcomes. Specific reference will be made when details of the New Local Plan 2020-2040 are made available.

6.7 Climate Change

Working from a consistent evidence base through the Borough Council and with partners, ensures that recommendations made in relation to the Climate Change shared agreement and New Local Plan 2020-2045 results in policy-specific areas being consistent and complementary to an approach that supports equality in both service provision and climate change outcomes. Specific reference will be made when details of the New Local Plan 2020-2040 are made available.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Staffordshire's Climate Emergency - Planning Policy Commitments

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

File available in Economic Development and Planning together with the following information available via the Stafford Borough Council website links:

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/Climate-Change-and-Green-Recovery

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/Climate-Change-and-Green-Recovery-Strategy-20-40

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/staffs-final-report-rev-3-updates-2020

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/stafford-policy-summary-addendum-final-2020

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/stafford-borough-local-plan-and-cil-viability-assessment

Contact Officer: Alex Yendole
Telephone Number: 07800 619530
Ward Interest: None
Report Track: Cabinet - 5/9/2024 (Only)
Key Decision: Yes

Appendix 1: Staffordshire's Climate Emergency - Planning Policy Commitments

Staffordshire's Climate Emergency - planning policy commitments

1. Introduction and background

Almost all Staffordshire District and Borough Councils have declared Climate Emergencies and have a variety of net zero targets in place. Whilst planning policies cannot achieve net zero in isolation, the planning system still plays a crucial role in reducing emissions in multiple sectors. Proactive policies can help to facilitate the transition necessary to achieve Staffordshire's net zero target whilst ensuring that more of the cost of meeting this is shouldered by the development industry, rather than being borne solely by public bodies to improve matters such as transport and energy efficiency through more costly retrofit measures. This shared statement aims to ensure that all signatory local planning authorities respond appropriately to Staffordshire's declared climate goals, by implementing the shared Staffordshire-wide climate evidence base and policy recommendations.

2. Planning policy measures identified for Staffordshire

With these principles in mind, Staffordshire Councils¹ prepared an evidence base for a number of climate change mitigation policy directions in 2020. These are set out in the Staffordshire County Council - Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Final Report 2020 ('the 2020 study'). For clarity, these are set out alongside the relevant supporting paragraph references from the 2020 study.

A. Policies for new build developments:

- Implement the highest CO₂ reduction targets for new buildings that can practically and viably be achieved, e.g. achieving net zero regulated emissions and considering options to go beyond this to achieve net zero unregulated emissions (3.1.3.1, 3.1.1.6)
- Require new development to achieve a target fabric and energy efficiency performance and be designed in accordance with an energy and heat hierarchy (3.1.3.2, 3.1.3.3)
- Achieve at least BREEAM 'Excellent' or 'Outstanding' for non-domestic buildings, considering setting minimum targets for BREEAM credits in Ene01 (3.1.3.1)
- Require all new developments to maximise opportunities for renewable energy (4.1.5.1)
- Require developers to monitor and report on operational energy use and / or CO₂ emissions, in order to confirm that the required level of improvement has been achieved, to help to close the 'performance gap' (3.1.3.1)
- Require developers to undertake Lifecycle Carbon Assessments and minimise embodied carbon. (3.1.1.3)
- Require high standards for water efficiency and conservation (3.1.3.4)

¹ With the exception of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

B. Policies and joint working for transport/location of development:

- Require new developments to reduce reliance on private vehicles, including consideration of altering densities to support mixed uses, demonstrating adequate links to bus routes and pedestrian and cycle networks through spatial strategies and Local Transport Plan (3.2.4)
- Supporting provision of ULEV vehicles, particularly within new developments, car parks and public realm facilities (3.2.4)
- Implement plans and/or new policy that promotes walking and cycling e.g. by establishing new cycle lanes, pedestrian routes, and public transport links within Staffordshire and beyond (3.2.4)
- Ensure that any transport planning, or road network expansion is required to quantify and take steps to significantly reduce emissions (3.2.4)
- Consider how they can use their licensing authority and other powers to promote sustainable transport modes, for instance by introducing low / zero emission zones or congestion charges, workplace parking charges, differential charges for parking permits, or requiring all taxis and buses to be ultra low emission or EV (3.2.4)

C. Policies for renewable energy generation

- Requiring all new developments to maximise opportunities for renewable energy, including considering requiring all new developments to include some form of onsite renewable electricity or heat generation and/or battery systems or setting a minimum target for the proportion of energy demands that should be met with renewables (4.1.5.1)
- Increase policy support for low and zero carbon (LZC) energy schemes and broaden policy criteria for acceptability, including identifying all of Staffordshire as being 'strategically suitable' for wind energy (whilst recognising that there is very limited land available in either Tamworth or Cannock Chase), acknowledging the need to achieve at least a tenfold increase in renewable energy generation in the County (4.1.5.2)
- Where appropriate for an individual local authority, consider other options for increasing renewable energy delivery, including issuing a 'call for sites' for large scale LZC schemes, considering issuing Local Development Orders to extent permitted development rights for large scale LZC schemes, working with community groups to deliver local energy projects and reviewing subsidy schemes to ensure these are compatible with the Net Zero target (4.1.6)

D. Policies for carbon sequestration and biodiversity

- Increase tree planting and afforestation rate, increasing forestry cover through the planting of broadleaf and conifer woodland each year, improving the yield class (productivity) of new trees, and increasing management of existing woodlands (4.2.4)
- Increase agroforestry and extend hedgerow length with an aim to increase carbon sequestration by increasing the amount of permanent vegetation on agricultural land whilst maintaining agricultural production (4.2.4)

- Involve ecological experts in the delivery of biodiversity net gain and carbon sequestration in the writing of planning conditions relating to biodiversity and environmental net gain, habitat or protected species to ensure the conditions are appropriately worded (4.2.4)

3. Further future evidence to reach net zero by 2050

In addition to the above it will also be necessary to address the gap in evidence regarding how far the above recommendations will go towards achieving net zero in Staffordshire by 2050, a matter which is not addressed in the 2020 study. In order to determine what other planning policy interventions may be required to achieve the County's net zero target it will be necessary to commission additional joint evidence to address the following;

- A. The impact of the 2020 study's climate change mitigation policy recommendations on the County's net zero pathway.
- B. Where policy targets may need to be raised or refined in future to achieve net zero in Staffordshire by 2050.
- C. The extent of the net zero target which can reasonably be influenced by planning policies and where wider initiatives outside of planning may be required to achieve this.

4. Agreed position between Staffordshire authorities

The authorities' position on this matter is a live issue and subject to any policy approach being found sound at local plan examination. Notwithstanding this, the following authorities commit to fully exploring the proposed policy directions set out in the 2020 study, as summarised in this statement, in their emerging Local Plans. This is subject to Member approval, policies being feasible and viable and not superseded by a subsequent study and/or revised evidence and provision of adequate resources to deliver the necessary evidence base:

- **South Staffordshire District Council**
- **Stafford Borough Council**
- **Cannock Chase District Council**
- **Tamworth Borough Council**
- **East Staffordshire Borough Council**
- **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council**
- **Lichfield District Council**
- **Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

Staffordshire County Council commit to proactively supporting and facilitating the delivery of the 2020 study measures through joint working with Staffordshire Local Planning Authorities, particularly on areas such as sustainable transport, active travel and carbon sequestration/biodiversity net gain.

Signatories to this statement

Cannock Chase District Council

Name:

Position:

East Staffordshire Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Lichfield District Council

Name:

Position:

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Stafford Borough Council

Name:

Position:

South Staffordshire District Council

Name:

Position:

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Name:

Position:

Tamworth Borough Council

Name:

Position:

Staffordshire County Council

Name:

Position: