

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

HOUSING COMMITTEE

8 DECEMBER 2020

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| Report Title | STROUD DISTRICT 2030 STRATEGY – LIMITING, ADAPTING, RECOVERING AND RESPONDING IN A CHANGING CLIMATE |
| Purpose of Report | To seek the views of the Committee on the draft 2030 Strategy, prior to its planned adoption by Full Council in 2021. |
| Decision(s) | The Committee RESOLVES to: a) Endorse the draft 2030 Strategy; b) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Place and Senior Carbon Neutral 2030 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee to make any changes to the draft 2030 Strategy arising from the current engagement and consultation process, and c) Commend the draft 2030 Strategy for adoption by Full Council in 2021, incorporating any changes made as a result of the consultation and engagement process referred to in b) above. |
| Consultation and Feedback | <p>Prior to the public launch of the document, the draft 2030 Strategy, the views of all officers and members had been sought. Special workshops and briefing sessions were held, most notably with senior managers on 12 August 2020 and an all members briefing session on 3 September 2020.</p> <p>The draft 2030 Strategy reflects feedback received to date from Council officers and members. As success depends so crucially on action and ownership by a wide range of partners, residents, communities and businesses, it is acknowledged that further changes to the document will likely be required as a result of the external engagement and consultation process that is currently ongoing. A verbal update on key areas of feedback from the public consultation will be provided at the meeting.</p> <p>Members are asked to note that the draft strategy will be coming to all four main committees for consideration and feedback, prior to Full Council in February 2021.</p> |

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| Options | <p>The draft 2030 Strategy sets an overall route map across a range of priority areas, with a supporting master plan. Collectively, these documents represent an array of options and approaches, based on evidence of key issues and challenges, to achieve the ambition to do everything within the Council's power to achieve a carbon neutral district by 2030.</p> <p>There will be scope to flex our approach through the dynamic action planning process involving communities, partner organisations and businesses that is described in the attached (appended) documents. An open, inclusive and responsive action planning process provides the best possible chance of success in achieving a carbon neutral district by 2030.</p> <p>Taking the above into account, the Committee's options are to accept the draft strategy, ask officers to consider amendments or reject the draft strategy.</p> | | | |
| Background Papers | None | | | |
| Appendices | <p>Appendix A – The 2030 Strategy: Limiting, Adapting, Recovering and Responding in a Changing Climate, Draft for Consultation, Autumn 2020. Strategy Documents – The 2030 Strategy</p> <p>Appendix B – The 2030 Strategy Masterplan, Draft for Consultation, Autumn 2020. Strategy Documents – The 2030 Strategy Master Plan</p> | | | |
| Implications (further details at the end of the report) | Financial | Legal | Equality | Environmental |
| | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A 'Climate Emergency' was declared by the Council administration on 16 November 2018, including a pledge to do everything within the Council's power to make Stroud District carbon neutral by 2030. The Climate Emergency was subsequently endorsed by Full Council on 24 January 2019, along with the following motion:
- a. To set out a plan of action, including clear targets and transparent reporting, to develop district wide locally determined contributions to complement national determined contributions in line with the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5C.
 - b. To include planning and support in the District for adaptation to the climate change that is already happening.

- c. To develop a strategy for Stroud District Council to play a leadership role in promoting community, public and business partnerships for this Carbon Neutral 2030 (CN2030) Commitment throughout the District, County and region.
- d. To work with partner bodies across the county to ensure that the climate emergency is adequately reflected in the development and implementation of all county wide strategies and plans, including Gloucestershire 2050, the Gloucestershire Industrial Strategy, Gloucestershire Energy Strategy and Gloucestershire Transport Plans.
- e. To investigate all possible sources of external funding and match funding to support this commitment.
- f. To work with key partner organisations within the County and region to secure external funding.
- g. To report back on an annual basis to Council on progress made.

1.2 Since the climate emergency declaration, progress has been made across a number of areas, such as:

- Operational development: Environment and Climate central in recovery planning as overseen by recovery board and integrated into officer coordination group; additional staff resource secured realising 2 fte officers dedicated to CN2030 and a shared supporting officer within the wider Corporate Governance Team.
- Own estates: £1m secured for Water Source Heat Pumps at Brimscombe Port and Ebley Mill to bolster our existing onsite renewables provision that has already generated in the region of 1.25m kwh of electricity. Our fleet has been 'greened' by replacing vehicles with EV and now includes 6 electric vehicles.
- Partnerships: Support to domestic and business sectors continues to realise retrofit measures and carbon savings and services have recently been expanded by successful bids to secure Green Homes Grants (GHG) funding. Alongside this top up funding enables advice provision to extend its reach to the 'Able to Pay' residents to support access to the GHG voucher scheme.

Residents are also well supported and encouraged in their endeavours to recycle more through an award winning partnership with Ubico.

Homes and businesses are being well protected from flooding by nationally recognised Rural Sub-Urban Drainage work.

Ongoing projects with local environmental charities and volunteer groups are realising hugely successful habitat regeneration and creation projects such as our Canal Regeneration work. This work also provides volunteering, apprenticeship and educational opportunities that help communities engage with our environmental ambitions.

A new partnership with Transition Stroud is realising neighbourhood climate action groups in our parishes with 18 groups already active in their communities on a range of projects, sharing experience and ideas.

- Strategy: The Draft Local Plan has been developed with the CN2030 pledge as a key focus and based upon a wide range of evidence including commissioning of experts to advise on planning and land use for maximising on our renewable generation capacity.

The draft 2030 Strategy (Appendix A) outlines more headline achievements so far under the 7 organising themes in the document.

- 1.3 Significantly, alongside the above activities, the Council has also been responding with partners and communities locally and nationally, to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Alongside its pervasive and far reaching impacts on all aspects of society and human health, the Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated very clearly the links between human activity and the health of the environment upon which we all depend. A focus on environment and climate is therefore central to all that we do as we plan for longer term recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and this is clearly referenced in the Council's Covid-19 Strategy – *Recover, Reset and Renew*, approved by Strategy and Resources Committee on 18 June, 2020.
- 1.4 The draft 2030 Strategy and supporting Masterplan, attached as Appendices A and B respectively, set out how we intend to fulfil the pledge to 'do everything in the Council's power to make Stroud district carbon neutral by 2030' and reaches beyond this to include our strategy for adapting to and, mitigating against, the effects of changing climate and ecological emergency. The documents address all of the points (a – g) referred to above on para 1.1 and the remainder of this covering report introduces the draft Strategy in more detail.

2. THE DRAFT 2030 STRATEGY AND ACCOMPANYING MASTERPLAN

- 2.1 The strategy and plan have been prepared on the basis of background research and contextual evidence review as well as through informal consultation via networks and groups on community needs and interests in relation to the strategy. It has been prepared by a small officer team and is now in draft form following consultation with the Leadership and Management Team and with the whole of council staff via survey on the intranet. Achieving the targets of the strategy is beyond the council's sole control and depends on action from everyone in the District. It is vital therefore that the strategy has the broadest possible ownership to start generating the 'buy-in' that will be required. The current engagement process, the 'District Dialogue' and the collaborative governance and ongoing action planning process are designed to achieve this. We fully expect changes to be made as a result of the current consultation and engagement.
- 2.2 The strategy establishes the context, requirements and approach to both climate and ecological emergency and takes serious consideration to recovery and future resilience building in the wake of the pandemic. It recognises that there is already a changing climate delivering challenges to our everyday lives and that lack of rapid action has both immediate and far reaching, serious consequences. The strategy sets out a vision for 2030 across 7 organising themes (Built Environment; Energy; Natural Environment; Mobility; Economy; Waste and Community). Six cross cutting themes address practical and social issues common to all aspects. An accompanying document gives the first iteration of a master framework for action including 26 quantified targets and success measures over a time framed range of commitments for our 2030 Mission. The commitments are framed within

the spheres of council influence as: 'Exemplar' – on our own estates; 'Enabler' – through partnership; 'Encourager' – indirect influence to private sectors. The strategy proposes a collaborative, community approach to action planning, delivery and governance and identifies starting points in terms of what the council is already achieving and the 7 next key priorities for each theme e.g. addressing the retrofit challenge; mainstreaming renewables etc.

- 2.3 The strategy and plan are currently in draft format for the purposes of public consultation. Under COVID constrained conditions we are putting effort into active online presence and social media communications to promote the website consultation pages. On these a presentation that gives a detailed overview of the strategy to enable the answering of an online questionnaire can be found. We are also launching the 'District Dialogue'. This is to be an ongoing feature of collaborative governance and planning processes but in this instance seeks feedback on the draft and suggestions for its improvement. District Dialogue events are being hosted by chair persons from our communities and enable people to bring their questions and find out more about the strategy. The consultation is ongoing to mid-December, running in tandem with the strategies progress through all committees leading to February's Full Council. It is recommended that any changes arising from the current consultation are made by the Strategic Director of Place and the Senior CN2030 Officer, in consultation with the Committee Chair and the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee. Key comments and feedback emerging from the consultation will be reported verbally at Committee.
- 2.4 Since the Strategy is a whole council commitment it will be coming to all committees for consideration and to Full Council for adoption in 2021.
- 2.5 We welcome comments on the whole document and given the remit of the Housing Committee, would like to highlight the following: The most significant area of annual emissions in our district is the built environment and its energy use. There is a clear implication in the 2030 ambition for how we manage our council buildings, including housing as we go forward and so particular attention is drawn to the Built Environment and Energy themes and the council's role as exemplar by addressing their own estates. It is also recognised that the council actually owns a small proportion of buildings in the District and so this, along with the many other courses of action the strategy and plan seeks to instigate, is a key area for us to engage with others on. The strategy and plan both state a strong, clear message about the need for collaboration and shared responsibility and action.
- 2.6 In addition to comments made by the committee we would welcome councillors to make individual comments on the website Strategy Documents – The 2030 Strategy and encourage friends, relatives and residents in their wards to also fill in the questionnaire as this strategy will have impacts on the whole district for many years to come.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The draft strategy and plan makes a clear public statement about how completely the council is addressing the need for 'emergency' action to address climate, ecological and recovery emergencies. It is therefore important that consultation provides sufficient opportunity for feedback and that overall the timescale leading to full council adoption is kept tight.

3.2 It is therefore recommended that this committee commend the strategy and plan to Full Council at the end of Feb '21 and endorse a process whereby interim changes, arising from the current engagement and consultation process, will be made by the Carbon Neutral Team, overseen by the Strategic Director of Place and, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and Group Leaders.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There is a General Fund earmarked reserve for Climate Change of £275k which can be used to meet the initial costs. The ongoing actions needed to implement the strategy will need to be costed and incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan of both the General Fund and HRA. Consideration should also be given for the funding of this additional expenditure needed to reflect the CN2030 commitment.

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4.2 Legal Implications

The overarching legislative context of the draft Strategy and Plan is The Climate Change Act 2008. This Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. The UK legal framework on climate change is also shaped by both caselaw and international agreements.

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4.3 Equality Implications

An EqIA is not required because the draft strategy and plan does not propose a discrete project, policy or action to be implemented. EqIA will be embedded across all actions within the strategy and will be completed ahead of any specific activity being undertaken.

4.4 Environmental Implications

The following sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Failure to endorse the draft strategy and/or support the process outlined in Decisions (b) and (c) could be seen as a failure to acknowledge the 'emergency' declared and increase the risk of overall failure to deliver on the CN commitment made.
- Delivery of targets within strategy will make a significant positive contribution to reducing the impacts of the changing climate on the district
- Delivering of the targets with the strategy will make significant contribution to the whole district contribution to meeting the Paris Conference carbon emission reduction targets