

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

17 OCTOBER 2019

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Environment and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mike Smith

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Report 2019

SUMMARY

Climate Change is once again growing in prominence, both in the awareness of the general public and in the media. We have a strong track record and have demonstrated significant performance in contributing to tackling the issue and in reducing our net emissions of greenhouse gases since Local Authority reporting began in 2009, and have been recognised nationally for our work on energy efficiency and carbon reduction. Under the voluntary 'Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020' which we committed to in 2018, we are required to submit a Greenhouse Gas Emissions report detailing all direct and indirect emissions from Council activity to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in October each year, and report our performance against a voluntary emissions target of 30% reduction on a 2009/10 baseline.

The annual report in Appendix 1 highlights that in 2018/19 we have performed extremely well once more, reducing our net emissions by 11.5% in the last 12 months to a total of 15,824 tonnes per annum. This is a reduction of 50.1% (or 15,867 tonnes) on the 2009/10 baseline and therefore we have significantly exceeded the challenging target set by BEIS. Since we adopted our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in January 2016 we have reduced the emissions from sources that are owned or controlled directly by us by 40.2%, and this is the sixth year in a row that our emissions activity has shown a decrease in a 12 month period.

Subsequently we have also made significant financial savings as a result, with combined financial savings / cost of avoidance of £166,804 in the last financial year, in addition to £553k in 2017/18 and £399k saved in 2016/17, totalling over £1.1m. As projects such as the LED street lighting replacement programme continue to deliver real benefits and savings, and the adopted Climate Change Strategy continues to be delivered, we will achieve our strategy targets and the challenge of a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from Council activity by March 2020.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

We have a growing national recognition for our work on climate change and fuel poverty, particularly around energy efficiency and carbon reduction from Council activity, and the positive impact our work on delivering affordable warmth schemes is having on residents and communities. This report documents another 12 months of positive performance on reducing greenhouse gas emissions (a contributor to climate change) and subsequently financial savings to the Council, and as such is an item of interest for Members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members note the positive performance in reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases from Council activity in 2018/19, and associated financial savings.
2. Members support our continued efforts to reduce our emissions via a range of activities.

DETAIL

1. In the response to climate change we have a long tradition, a strong track record and have demonstrated significant performance in both reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases (mitigation) and better preparing for extreme climatic events (adaptation). We are a 'Climate Local' signatory and have been recognised nationally for our efforts and performance across a range of areas such as energy efficiency and emissions reductions. We are the only Local Authority in the region to publicly set targets and transparently report emissions, have an adopted strategy and action plan in place, and report to government annually on our performance under the national 'Emissions Reduction Pledge'.
2. In 2011 the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (now BEIS) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to provide a framework for all Local Authorities to work together towards a shared vision on energy efficiency and carbon reduction. This included the requirement for Local Authorities to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions (aligned to international guidance on greenhouse gas reporting – the GHG Protocol), and to report their progress annually. This ceased in 2018 and was replaced by a voluntary 'Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020' with the government encouraging public sector bodies to adopt a 30% emissions reduction target on a 2009/10 baseline, which we signed up to in September 2018.
3. This annual report at Appendix 1 presents our greenhouse gas emissions from Council activity in 2018/19, and reports the fourth year of progress against the challenging annual targets that we set as a Council in May 2016 for emissions reductions over a five year period from 2015 – 2020. These targets can be found in our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, adopted by Cabinet in January 2016, and we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council activity by 21% on 2014/2015 levels by March 2020.
4. The report details our performance to reduce emissions across all council activity. This is split across seven key areas of activity from energy in buildings, to fleet management and street lighting, and the table of emissions can be found on page 5. Section 3 of Appendix 1 details our emissions in 2018/19 as proportions of the total, shows the direction of travel since 2009 and provides commentary on our continued excellent performance as a Council.
5. 2018/19 has seen us once again perform extremely well on emissions reductions and exceed our challenging targets. For the benefit of members, some headlines are provided here:
 - In 2018/19 we emitted 15,824 tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent – measure of all greenhouse gases), representing 0.17 tonnes of CO₂e per household, compared to 17,879 tonnes in 2017/18
 - Our short term challenging target was to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 3.1% in year by March 2019, but we have far exceeded this with a net 11.5% reduction in the last 12 months, representing a reduction of 2,055 tonnes of CO₂e per annum
 - Overall scope 1 emissions (stationary or mobile emissions from sources that are owned or controlled directly by us) have fallen by 50.3% since 2012/13
 - This is the sixth year in succession that total emissions activity has shown a decrease in a 12 month period.

6. The graph on page 8 of Appendix 1 shows our direction of travel is very positive and we are far ahead of our target to meet our challenging 2020 commitments. More details can be found in the appendix. It must be remembered that there are other significant benefits to the Council from our continued positive performance on reducing emissions, which are not reported as part of the submission to BEIS. Greenhouse gas emissions arise from consumption, and our drive to reduce emissions is directly contributing to reducing the consumption of energy and fuels across the organisation. As a result, there are significant financial savings resulting from schemes to reduce emissions, deliver activity more efficiently and invest to save projects.
7. During 2017/18, the reduction in emissions from scope 1, 2 and 3 activities represents combined financial savings / cost of avoidance of £166,804. This includes £28k saved with fewer business miles travelled, £49k saved through much lower power consumption in streetlights and £54k saved through less energy used in our buildings.
8. In 2018/19 we also reached a milestone with our renewable energy installations and have now generated in excess of 1 million Kwh of power since our first solar PV scheme was switched on in 2012. In year we generated almost 150 megawatt hours (MWh) of energy from our 27 individual renewable energy installations which was all used in situ. This represents the annual consumption of approximately 38 average households but perhaps more significantly currently saves us in excess of £20k per annum through not having to purchase that electricity. Our generating capacity has increased significantly over recent years, from just 8MWh in 2011/12.
9. It must be recognised that individuals, teams and services right across the Council are contributing to this success, and in addition our partners such as Tees Active are prioritising carbon reduction and working hard to drive down consumption and emissions across all our leisure facilities and making excellent progress with a 29% reduction since 2013/14. The Council continues to explore opportunities for new carbon and financial saving schemes such as energy storage, decentralised energy, 'greening the fleet' and invest to save renewable energy schemes. In particular over the next 12 months the Council is focusing on the opportunities that electric vehicles (EV) present across the whole fleet, including refuse vehicles, as well as improving EV charging infrastructure across the Borough. It is hoped we will see further improvements over the coming months and years.
10. Our adopted Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan sets out collective measures to continue to improve our performance which is due to run up to January 2021, and we will begin to review this plan in 2020. This is timely given the governments use of a statutory instrument in June 2019 amending the Climate Change Act 2008 to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels. While some Local Authorities are choosing to declare a 'Climate Emergency', the Council has already publicly committed to tackling climate change in 2015 and 2018, has an adopted and measurable strategy and plan in place, reports performance publicly with submissions to government and has already halved emissions from its assets and operations since 2009. As such we will continue on this path through a refreshed Climate Change Strategy beginning next year.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

11. The Local Government Association (LGA) and BEIS recognise that action on energy efficiency and carbon reduction by Local Authorities yields significant benefits for residents and businesses across the country. Leadership is needed at both the national and local level to meet UK energy and climate change objectives; saving residents and businesses money on energy bills, generating income from local energy schemes (including renewable)

and driving growth through investment and jobs in low carbon industries. Our performance over recent years continues to contribute to this.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

12. This report does not contain corporate parenting implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. As described in section 7, action to reduce emissions can contribute significantly to financial savings, given that greenhouse gas emissions are intrinsically linked to resource use. The annual savings from emissions reductions of £167k in 2018/19 is largely as a result of significant reductions in energy consumption from schemes such as the implementation of the LED street lighting programme alongside savings such as reduced energy consumption in buildings.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. We are requested to report annual emissions to the Secretary of State under the Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020 with BEIS, however there are no legal implications of not reporting within deadlines.

RISK ASSESSMENT

15. This reporting of annual greenhouse gas emissions is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

16. This report represents a requirement to publish statistics on our emissions performance using a particular methodology and template, and hence no consultation is required on its content.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2017/18; Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

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