

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

15 OCTOBER 2020

**REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL DECISION

Environment and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mike Smith

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Report 2020

SUMMARY

The issue of Climate Change continues to grow in prominence, both in the awareness of the general public and in the media as a result of government policy drivers such as the adoption of a statutory 'Net Zero' emissions target, and public campaigns such as the Climate Emergency. 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 2019/20 we have performed extremely well once more, reducing our net emissions by 15.1% in the last 12 months to a total of 13,435 tonnes per annum. This is a reduction of 57.6% (or 18,256 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 49.2%, and this is the seventh year in a row that our emissions activity has shown a decrease in a 12 month period.

In recent years we have also made significant financial savings as a result, with combined financial savings / cost of avoidance in the last 3 years of over £1.1m. Projects such as the LED street lighting replacement programme and energy efficiency improvements in our assets have continued to deliver real benefits and savings. As the adopted Climate Change Strategy draws to its conclusion in January 2021, and we are over half way on a path to Net Zero emissions from our own estate and operations, we must now develop a new Net Zero Plan to take us to zero emissions, and build on the emergence of more sustainable behaviours that have come to the fore during the Covid pandemic.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

We have growing national recognition for our work to tackle 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 2019/20, 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 have 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 2019/20, and reports the fifth 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 2 of Appendix 1 details our emissions in 2019/20 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. It should be noted that the full year of emissions reporting concluded before any impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic and can be considered a true record of performance. For the benefit of members, some headlines are provided here:
 - In 2019/20 we emitted 13,435 tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent – measure of all greenhouse gases), representing 0.15 tonnes of CO₂e per household, compared to 15,824 tonnes in 2018/19
 - Our short term challenging target was to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 2.6% in year by March 2020, but we have far exceeded this with a net 15.3% reduction in the last 12 months, representing a reduction of 2,389 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 48.6% since 2012/13
 - This is the seventh year in succession that total emissions activity has shown a decrease in a 12 month period.
6. The graph on page 10 of Appendix 1 shows how significant our direction of travel has been since Cabinet adopted challenging targets in January 2016, and how we have met our 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. In the last 4 years we can demonstrate savings / cost avoidance of over £1.1m from our drive to be more efficient in the use of fuel and energy. During 2019/20, the reduction in emissions from energy use in our owned buildings and assets represented combined financial savings / cost of avoidance of £249k.
 8. 2019/20 has also seen us increase generation from our renewable energy installations and we have now generated in over 1.2 million Kwh of power since our first solar PV scheme was switched on in 2012. In year we generated over 160 megawatt hours (MWh) of energy from our 27 individual renewable energy installations which was all used in situ. This represents the annual consumption of over 40 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 72% 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 large scale 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 at our sites and 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 require a new plan to be adopted in 2021 charting our path to Net Zero emissions in response to the amendment of the Climate Change Act 2008 to bring all UK greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. 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.
 11. Over the next 12 months as we plan for further environmental improvements, reductions in emissions and continue to tackle fuel poverty, we must reflect on the positive sustainability outcomes that have arisen from the Covid 19 pandemic to ensure that we plan a 'green recovery', instigate clean growth and develop a sustainable Borough. Since March and the lockdown period began, there has been measureable improvements in air quality, reduced vehicle movements, lower greenhouse gas emissions, increased participation in

sustainable transport modes, and increased appreciation and demand for access to open space, green infrastructure and the countryside.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

12. 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

13. This report does not contain corporate parenting implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. 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 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

15. We are required to report annual emissions to the Secretary of State under the voluntary 'Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020' with BEIS, however there are no legal implications of not reporting within deadlines. We still await guidance on future Local Authority reporting requirements under the governments 'Net Zero' emissions commitment made in 2019.

RISK ASSESSMENT

16. 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

17. This report represents a requirement under a voluntary reporting agreement 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 2019/20; Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

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