

Cabinet Decision:

Thursday 15 February 2024

Title of Item/Report

Environmental Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Strategy (ES&CRS) 2022-32 Monitoring Report

Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on the Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy (ES&CRS).

Climate change poses a real threat to society and biodiversity. There were already increasing impacts of flooding, high winds, heat waves and species collapse. Efforts to limit climate change by reducing carbon emissions needed to be widespread, urgent and sustained.

The Councils Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy (ES&CRS), adopted in 2023, set out the direction the Council needed to take and described the actions that would contribute to the achievement of net zero. The report outlined progress since the adoption of the strategy, including reductions in energy consumption and efforts to support biodiversity.

The Council had made significant progress within the resources available, achieving a steady decline in carbon emissions over a longer period. However, substantial additional investment in the coming years, beyond that which was identified, would be required if the Council was to achieve the stated ambition of being a Net Zero authority by 2032

Continued concentration on measures to improve our energy efficiency and reduce emissions from our assets and fleet, are an urgent priority, alongside counterbalancing natural solutions such as tree planting and solar energy generation.

HM Government had entered binding international arrangements for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and set out comprehensive requirements within the Environment Act. The secondary legislation that would define targets for relevant local and regional agencies, had been delayed in a number of key areas. However, the Council would need, at some point, to show substantial further progress on CO₂, waste, water and air quality, and biodiversity, beyond that which is achievable within current budgets.

The Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) Net Zero Strategy incorporated priorities for homes & communities, public organisations, and nature & resources, alongside

decarbonisation of industry and transport. The TV Strategy was designed to complement the strategies of the partner Authorities and the Council goals were broadly aligned. The TVCA strategy highlighted opportunities for economic growth associated with clean energy and 'green' technologies, however it also acknowledged the importance of maximising the impact of national funding and Government Policies.

Cabinet were asked to consider making representations to the Government for more resources toward the major investment required to deliver our environmental sustainability objectives.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The positive progress on the Environmental Sustainability targets, as set out in this report and the appendices be noted.
2. Cabinet seek to influence Government to provide substantial additional resources to enable further decarbonisation, environmental protection and community resilience.
3. The identification of additional resources, within future Medium Term Financial Plans, to support the next phase of carbon reduction and environmental sustainability measures be supported.

Reasons for the Decision

This report is to update Cabinet upon the actions following the adoption of the Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy 2022-32.

Cabinet is also invited to study the data which indicates the reduction of greenhouse gasses over a sustained period and the highlighted position of carbon emissions for the authority relative to targets.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None.

Details of any Dispensations

Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on 23 February 2024

Date of Publication: Monday 19 February 2024