

**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2021**

EGSP.06/21 LOCAL ENVIRONMENT (CLIMATE CHANGE) STRATEGY

The Corporate Director of Economic Development submitted report PC.03/21 which provided an update on the progress of the adoption of the Local Environment (Climate Change) Strategy and also contained the Amended Local Environment (Climate Change) Strategy and the Draft Action Plan.

In considering the report, Members raised the following questions and comments:

- How had the proposed targets for waste and recycling been arrived at?

The Policy and Communications Manager explained that there was a sector group in relation to waste which sought to develop a county wide approach and that the targets were in line with those of the county wide strategy. Officers were engaging in a Task and Finish Group on carbon budget implications and it was likely that as further data and evidence was amassed the targets would be amended in the future.

The Member noted that another factor which may affect the waste and recycling targets was behaviour change related to the reduced uses of plastics in products.

The Policy and Communications Manager agreed that behaviour change may also impact targets in the future. The current targets were built on the hierarchy of waste reduction and also considered energy recovery as set out in the Draft Action Plan.

The Panel discussed the current processes for the selling of recyclates.

- Why was the date for the City Council to become net zero by listed as 203X?

The Policy and Communications Manager responded that initially the Council had considered setting the target for becoming carbon net zero by 2030. However, the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership (ZCCP) had adopted a target date of 2037 for the county. Were the Council to adopt the target of 2037, it would not delay Officers from undertaking work in relation to becoming carbon zero, a 2030 target date would be a greater challenge to meet given the scale of change the organisation needed to undergo to become carbon net zero. The issue would be decided by Council when the final Strategy was submitted for adoption.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder advised that setting an earlier target date for the Council to become carbon net zero would increase the cost to the authority of making that transition. He noted that the government's national target for becoming carbon net zero was 2050, based on the Paris Agreement and underpinned by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): 2050 had been selected as the timeframe as that considered to be realistically deliverable. Any increased costs would have to be met from within the Council's existing

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resources and therefore would require use of reserves, increases to Council Tax or reduction of spending on existing services.

In addition to the cost implications of adopting an earlier target date there were constraints in relation to technology. The Council's fleet generated 50% of the organisation's carbon output, in terms of future procurement, the Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder noted that electric vehicles were available for smaller fleet items, but currently that technology was not available for larger plant vehicles used by the Council.

A Member commented that achieving carbon net zero by 2037 would be a significant improvement on 2050.

The Policy and Communications Manager advised that the reduction of carbon would be managed by a carbon account model which included both production and consumption, as set out in the Draft Action Plan.

The Member asked if the 2037 target date was adopted, whether rates would need to be increased.

The Corporate Director advised that was a likely scenario. The Policy and Communications Manager added that some of the scenarios set out in the Cumbria Baseline report would require large scale county wide investment.

- Was it usual practice for business cases to be submitted for projects?

The Corporate Director confirmed that it was standard practice for business cases to be submitted for Council projects, both for consideration within the organisation and as part of bids to external organisations for.

- What was the most significant risk in relation to the Strategy?

The Policy and Communications Manager noted that a number of risks were broadly identified within the report to assist with the risk assurance of the Strategy and Action Plan. He considered the principal risk was for the Strategy not to be adopted as it would negatively impact funding bids to external organisations, as bids were generally underpinned by a strategy or policy.

- Would performance monitoring of the strategy commence when it was implemented?

The Policy and Communications Manager advised that a performance framework had been drafted alongside metrics to measure the authority's carbon footprint. It was expected that performance against the Action Plan would be reported via the regular performance reports on an annual basis. However, the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel in its consideration of the matter had requested that performance against the Action Plan be reported to it on a 6 monthly rather than annual basis.

The Panel indicated that it wished to receive performance information on a 6 monthly basis.

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- With reference to the Actions for the next six months (December 2020 to May 2021) table contained in the report, a Member noted that items in the finance column were described as None / None required, she sought clarification on those terms.

The Policy and Communications Manager undertook to provide a written response to the Panel.

- A Member noted that the ZCCP would undertake business engagement, he felt in order for the Council to deliver its targets it would need the support of local businesses, and therefore the Council should liaise with local companies and communities.

The Corporate Director welcomed the suggestions and noted that as part of the Communication and Engagement Strategy, Officers would consider ways of working with and supporting local businesses.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder added that businesses were looking to the Council to adopt the Strategy so that its direction was clear. The Strategy was not restricted to the reduction of carbon but encompassed the Council's ways of working across the board. The Strategy was a living document and as such it would be amended as needed to reflect new data and evidence.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder was confident that, were the Strategy to be adopted, the Council would be able to move forward quickly with the activities identified in the Action Plan and Strategy. He felt it was important to capitalise on the public's enthusiasm to address climate change, it was equally important that concerns relating to financial matters were listened to and dealt with appropriately.

RESOLVED – 1) That report PC.03/21 Local Environment (Climate Change) Strategy be received.

2) That future performance reports be submitted to the Panel on a six monthly cycle.

3) That the Policy and Communications Manager provide further information on the finances in respect of the six month action plan.