

North Tyneside Council

Report to Audit Committee

Date: 15 November 2023

Title: Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Corporate Risk

Report from Service Area: Environment

Responsible Officer: Paul Nelson, Head of Environmental Sustainability **Tel: (0191) 643 6467**

Wards affected: ALL

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

In July 2019 full Council declared a Climate Emergency, and subsequently, in further acknowledgement of the gravity and urgency of the Climate Emergency, the refreshed Our North Tyneside Council Plan 2021-25, approved by Council in September 2021, included the following ambition: -

“We will publish an action plan of the steps we will take and the national investment we will seek to make North Tyneside Carbon Net-Zero by 2030.”

There is a risk allocated to the Director of Environment in the Corporate Risk register regarding this policy priority. This report outlines the approach to managing this risk.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Audit Committee note the approach to managing the risks addressed in this report and make suggestions to further enhance the arrangements as appropriate.

1.3 Information:

1.3.1 Carbon net-zero and current performance

In July 2019 full Council declared a Climate Emergency, setting a target to reduce the carbon footprint of the Authority and the Borough by 50% by 2023 and to become carbon neutral by 2050. Subsequently, in further acknowledgement of the gravity and urgency of the Climate Emergency, the refreshed Our North Tyneside Council Plan 2021-25, approved by full Council in September 2021, included the following ambition;

“We will publish an action plan of the steps we will take and the national investment we will seek to make North Tyneside Carbon Net-Zero by 2030.”

Net-Zero means achieving a balance between the number of emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. It requires the reduction of existing emissions, and the subsequent removal (offsetting) of remaining emissions.

Working towards a net-zero target recognises that there will be some emissions at the target date which cannot be mitigated against through planned interventions and that these need to be fully offset / inset. Traditionally this would be through natural carbon sequestration such as land and trees, although increasingly the national policy context is including the potential for technological solutions, such as carbon capture and storage. The Authority is actively participating in an emerging project which may facilitate and enable local solutions to manage residual emissions.

The Authority's carbon footprint is made up of the power, heat and water used to run its operational buildings, including the sheltered accommodation offer but not schools, the electricity used to power over 31,000 street lighting apparatus, the fuel and power used to operate the Authority's fleet of vehicles that are used to deliver services and the business miles staff travel in their own vehicles (not including commuting to and from work). This definition of the Authority's carbon footprint is in line with central government's Greenhouse Gas Protocol guidance.

The Authority submits an annual performance report to the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), formally the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) that details the year-on-year measurement of the Authority's carbon footprint. This is published on the Authority's website and is included as a background paper to this report. At the end of 2022/23, the Authority's carbon footprint had decreased by 58% since the baseline year of 2010/11, exceeding the 2023 50% target.

The Borough's carbon footprint is made up of the power and heat used in the commercial, industrial and domestic buildings across the whole of the borough, emissions from road and rail transport, and land use and forestation activities, which can result in either a release into or removal of emissions from the atmosphere. The data for carbon emissions for UK districts is produced by central government and is released two years in arrears, meaning the latest data released in 2023 was for the year 2021.

An annual report is provided to the Authority by DESNZ detailing the carbon footprint of the borough. The most recent report shows that between the baseline year of 2005 and 2021, carbon emissions have decreased by 45%.

The most recent data shows that the respective carbon footprints are:

- Authority – 12,633 tonnes of CO₂e (2010/11 base line year, 29,954 tonnes of CO₂e).
- Borough – 789,627 tonnes of CO₂e (2005 base line year, 1,426,293 tonnes of CO₂e).

Cabinet agreed the most recent update of the Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan in September 2023 and this is included as a background paper to this report.

1.3.2 Corporate Risk Management

This section of the report includes a summary of the overall approach adopted towards the Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Corporate Risk.

Carbon Net-Zero 2030 (1252): There is a risk that significant progress against the actions in the Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan (that are deliverable by the Authority) may not be made by 2030.

The Authority has an Action Plan containing over 150 actions across 10 key workstreams that will help to significantly reduce carbon emissions. The Action Plan has been shaped by an understanding of the source of emissions and available technological solutions, evolving Government policy, and is produced alongside key stakeholders following a range of engagement activities.

The Authority recognises that the delivery of the action plan is a corporate challenge that requires senior leadership. Governance and development of the action plan is carried out by the Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Board. This is co-chaired by Sam Dand, Director for Environment, and Councillor Sandra Graham, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and is made up of senior

managers and officers and representatives from the finance team. The Board meets monthly to review key progress against the action plan.

At the request of Cabinet, the Action Plan is reviewed annually and the refresh considered by Cabinet alongside a performance update. This was last completed in September 2023 and a copy of the Cabinet report is included as a background paper to this report.

In keeping with the Authority's approach to updating and delivering the Action Plan, the Authority reviews a range of emerging Government policy and guidance documents, specifically those which are associated with the UK Government Ten Point Plan which was released in November 2020.

Developing actions alongside the Government's Ten Point Plan enables the Authority to align to funding, infrastructure projects and technological developments as they develop and become available.

Funding streams released by Government e.g. Public Sector De-carbonisation Scheme and Green Homes Grant are supporting project delivery. Officers continue to explore and apply for grant funding opportunities that will match against Council committed finances and deliver key strategic carbon reduction projects.

The Authority's carbon footprint is less than two percent of the overall Borough's carbon footprint. Participation has been secured from a number of public sector and large private businesses to work together on a Board to tackle borough wide carbon emissions. Board members are supporting collaboration and project delivery.

Delivery of the Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan was included in Internal Audit's plan for 2022/23. This has provided assurance on the delivery of the Carbon Net Zero plan and made a number of recommendations to further strengthen governance. These recommendations have been accepted and are being implemented within the programme governance.

1.4 Decision options:

It is recommended that Audit Committee note the approach to managing the risks addressed in this report and make suggestions to further enhance the arrangements as appropriate.

1.5 Reasons for recommended option:

This recommendation will allow the Authority to identify further opportunities to enhance the risk management arrangements in place.

1.6 Appendices:

N/A; see background papers below.

1.7 Contact officers:

Paul Nelson, Head of Environmental Sustainability, tel. (0191) 643 6467

1.8 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) [Annual Greenhouse Gas Report 2022-23](#)
- (2) [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics](#)
- (3) [Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan](#)
- (4) [Report to Cabinet: Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan Update](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

There are no consultation / community engagement implications arising directly from this report.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising directly from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

2.6 Risk management

The risk under consideration is detailed in the body of this report

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

Management of the Carbon Net-Zero 2030 corporate risk has a direct impact on the environmental sustainability of the Authority's operations and the Borough.